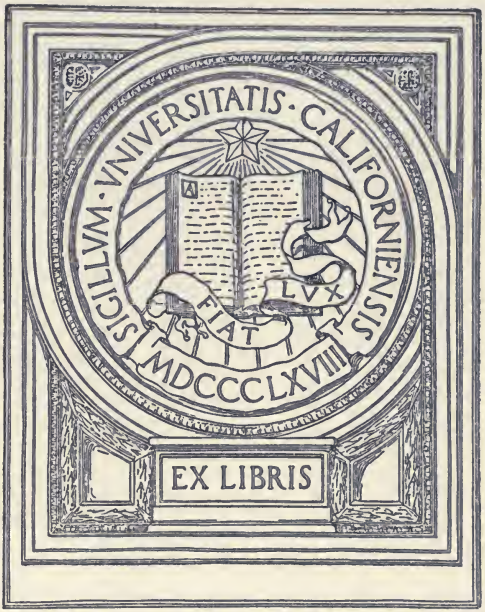
7/6


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/memoirsofjosephs00mundrich

Wageman del

J. Cox sculp

from his old friend
The Author

# MEMOIRS

OF

# JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN,

COMEDIAN.

BY HIS SON

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
1844.

904
M965
M96

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

London :
Printed by S. & J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

"I HAVE seen this gifted actor — in Sir Christopher Curry — in Old Dornton — diffuse a glow of sentiment which has made the pulse of a crowded theatre beat like that of one man; when he has come in aid of the pulpit, doing good to the moral heart of a people. I have seen some faint approaches to this sort of excellence in other players; but, in the grand grotesque of farce, Munden stands out as single and unaccompanied as Hogarth. Hogarth, strange to tell, had no followers. The school of Munden began, and must end with himself."—*Elia*, "*On the Acting of Munden.*"

# MEMOIRS

OF

# JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN.

---

## CHAPTER I.

Garrick :—his contemporaries and theatrical children—Shuter, Munden's model and instructor—Joe Munden's birth and parentage—An apothecary's boy and law-stationer's clerk—His strolling propensity—Journeys and humorous adventures—Engagement at Chester—Becomes a manager and lessee—The Chester company: Cooke, Mrs. Whitlock, Mrs. Hun (Canning's mother), Austin, &c.—Munden's unhappy *liaison*: its unexpected rupture—His marriage—Private theatricals at Eaton Hall—Death of Edwin—Despair of a successor—Mr. Const engages Munden—Our actor's first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre—Criticisms on his performance.

On the 10th June, 1776, Mr. Garrick retired from the stage, and quitted it, leaving no rival or successor—for no subsequent actor could embrace the vast sphere of his genius. He ran through the "whole compass" of the drama, and was "master of all." Even Mrs. Siddons, the miracle of our times, who was as fond of

playing comedy, as Mrs. Jordan (another miracle) was of attempting tragedy, could not command the gift of universal dramatic talent: the comedy of the one was serious, and the tragedy of the other insipid. When some one observed to Sheridan, that a tragedy of Cumberland's was not entertaining,—"I am sure it is," said Sherry, "for I laughed at it from beginning to end."

It is difficult to estimate the powers which constitute an actor. Men of the highest attainments, of the most efficient physical powers, and agreeable persons, have totally failed. The instances are not rare, when a performer, who approached so near the summit that he seemed to touch it, was yet an inch beneath. Others have played the most effective parts with correctness and judgment, and met with but cold approbation; the "mens divinior" was not in them: the applause was, in no few instances, reserved for the ignorant, the dissolute, and the idle.

None of these remarks apply to the three distinguished performers referred to,—especially not to Garrick. Truly characterized—

> "As an actor, confessed without rival to shine;
> As a wit, if not first, in the very first line."

We have spoken of the actor: in the latter character, he replied to Goldsmith's Retaliation with force and neatness; and lashed his assailant, Dr. Hill, in two, perhaps, the most poig-

nant epigrams in our language. His epitaph on Sterne—his prologues and epilogues are master-pieces in their way. In conjunction with the elder Colman, he wrote the "Clandestine Marriage,"—the second best comedy of modern times:—the part of Lord Ogleby has generally been attributed to Garrick.*

Mr. Garrick took his farewell of the stage in Don Felix, in Mrs. Centlivre's play—"A Wonder—a Woman keeps a Secret,"—thus confirming Sir Joshua Reynolds's impression, who, in delineating him, at a loss to choose between Tragedy and Comedy, turns his admiring glance towards Tragedy, but his attitude and smiling face seem to imply: "How can I tear myself from Comedy." He delivered a farewell address, and took his leave, admired and regretted by all.

In summing up the general merits of this

* I believe Geo. Colman, jun., denies this. However, it is certain that Garrick had a large share in writing it. Mr. Austin was present when Garrick read the play in the green-room. Feeling fatigued, he handed the MS. to Mr. King. Mr. King read it in his usual tone, until, warming with the subject, he imitated the voice and manner of an old country beau—the counterpart of the character, well known to himself and Mr. Austin. Garrick listened with evident delight, and, when he took back the MS., said, "King, I intended that part for myself; but you shall play it. I cannot play it, after having heard you read it." King did play it, and in such a style as was never approached until it was acted by Mr. William Farren.

unrivalled actor, it is admitted, on all hands, that he carried his art to its highest pitch of perfection; whilst he conferred dignity on its professors by the propriety of his conduct, his literary abilities, and his familiar intimacy with noble and eminent men. Even the House of Commons, when it refused to enforce the standing order, which would have excluded him from the gallery during a debate, paid a high tribute to the merit of the greatest master of elocution. Most of his predecessors, excepting Betterton, who, from Colley Cibber's eloquent description, must have been a master of his art, were mere mouthers. Garrick banished declamation from the stage, and introduced a natural tone of speaking, more in conformity with the language of passion in ordinary life. There had prevailed, also, a pedantry in the use of action and in gesticulation. It was supposed that the dignity of tragedy required that the arms should be moved horizontally, "sawing the air," and one at a time; "the right hand laboured while the left lay still." Garrick broke through this conventional rule at once, in Murphy's "Orphan of China;" advancing to the front of the stage, and exclaiming, "China is lost for ever!" with both arms raised above his head. The effect was startling, and the truth of the attitude was at once recognised by the audience. The only fault alleged against him is, his want of perception in continuing the

incongruity of the usage of modern costume in tragedies of an ancient date; playing, for instance, Macbeth in a red coat: but the writer can state, on the authority of the late Mr. Austin, that Garrick had long considered the subject. It was not in the catalogue of his demerits which Sterne's "Critic" discovered; and, had it been, he might have appealed to the thorough illusion which he always created, and exclaimed, "Was the eye silent?" But Garrick was a prudent man: he knew that the public did not demand it, and were satisfied without it; he was afraid of encouraging a taste which might prove in the end too exorbitant to gratify—of raising a spirit which he could not exorcise; and he did not think it necessary to sacrifice his hard-earned competency to gratify a fastidious appetite for secondary objects. No doubt the public were largely indebted to that accomplished man and excellent actor, Mr. John Kemble, for the benefit which his classical education, correct judgment, and thorough knowledge of his profession, conferred on the national taste; but it was Agamemnon sacrificing his child. Mr. Kemble devoted a large portion of his fortune to the ambition of forming a correct scenic personification. Like the great masters in painting, Mr. Garrick endeavoured to transmit his perfection in his art to posterity. He instructed many tyros, especially the younger Bannister, in tragedy, and

Miss Young;* wrote for, and encouraged the rising comedians,—Quick and others,—whom he brought prominently forward, and termed his children. But there were comic actors, his cotemporaries, who needed not instruction, for they seemed to play from instinct:† such actors were Weston and Shuter. To the latter performer, who took great pains with the young aspirant, the public are indebted, unaccompanied by servile imitation, for a large portion of the diversion which they derived from the rich humour of Munden.

Joseph, or, as he was more generally called, Joe Munden, was the son of a humble tradesman in Brook's Market, Holborn, where he was born in the year 1758. He might have replied, as Horne Tooke did with great readi-

---

* The anecdote of Miss Young is affecting. She played Cordelia to Mr. Garrick's Lear a few days previous to his retirement. On returning to the green-room, Garrick remarked, "My dear, I shall never be your father again." "Then, sir," rejoined Miss Young, kneeling, "Give me a father's blessing." "God bless you, my child," said Mr. Garrick, placing his hands on her head in visible emotion!

† Weston is said to have been a prototype of Liston, occasioning roars of laughter by a single look. This seems confirmed by the portrait of him by Zoffani, in Dr. Last. On one occasion, when the audience were dissatisfied at some assumption of Weston's, and called out, "Shuter, Shuter!" Weston, looking towards the lady who was on the stage with him, exclaimed, with an appearance of simplicity, "Why should you shoot her? I am sure she plays her part very well."

ness, when, at the University, some impertinent person inquired what profession his father followed, "He is a Turkey merchant." True it was, that the elder Mr. Munden, like the elder Mr. Horne, dealt in geese and chickens. Brook's Street is a short one, but it was the grave of Chatterton and the birth-place of Munden.

Joe was a very refractory boy. He is said to have been apprenticed to an apothecary; but though not highly educated, he wrote an extraordinarily fine hand, and through this accomplishment obtained a situation in the office of Mr. Druce, a respectable law-stationer, in Chancery-lane. Here, it is said, Joe handled the ruler as a truncheon, and taught the hackney writers to perform Richard the Third.

In the evening he emerged from his parental window, which the curious may satisfy themselves by inspection is not far from the ground, and stole to the gallery of the theatre, to witness the performance of Garrick, &c. He thus imbibed a taste for acting, if, indeed, a taste is ever formed in human beings, without that *afflatus*, which, like the faculty of instinct in animals, seems to direct them to the most natural bent of their pursuit. It is singular that the number of persons who are what is termed "stage struck," has greatly decreased since it has become a profitable profession. The new "Stars" are very rare; but when it barely afforded a subsistence, there was scarcely an attorney's

clerk who did not leave that "calling for this idle trade." Perhaps there was something attractive in the romantic career they followed; as gipsies are said to despise the practices of ordinary life. Some of the greatest actors that the stage has yet seen, performed in barns—Yates and Shuter in a booth at Bartholomew Fair.

Many were the times that truant Joe eloped from his home to join a band of strollers; and was followed and brought back by his fond and indulgent mother. She knew his haunts, and that he had not the means of wandering far from town; and she generally succeeded in finding him. Dreading an escapade, she was in the habit of mixing among the audience and pouncing upon poor Joe when he made his appearance. On one occasion, his coat thrice presented itself to the view of the audience before its owner appeared in *propria personâ;* being the best coat in the company,—and, consequently, the most suitable for gentlemen in comedy. His coadjutors were put to sad shifts. The actor off the stage, as we have seen, supplied part of his wardrobe to him who succeeded; and a jack-chain borrowed from the kitchen of a neighbouring alehouse served for the fetters that bound the tyrant Bajazet.*

Various droll stories have been recorded of Joe's early career. Some of them are doubt-

* In the country they played upon what is called "shares," and even the pieces of candle were carefully divided.

less apocryphal; for in after life Munden was in the habit of what is called *cramming* the hunters after theatrical biography, who sought to fill the Magazines at his expense. The most suspicious tale is that, in a moment of emergency, he presented himself before a serjeant of the Warwickshire Militia, and, under the pretext of enlisting, obtained bed and board for the night, quietly taking his departure the next morning. This is manifestly a fiction; the serjeant would have tendered the shilling at once, and knew his duty too well to let his recruit be a deserter. It is certain that he contrived to get conveyed to Liverpool, and there, in consequence of his great skill in penmanship, obtained a situation in the Town Clerk's office.* It was at Liverpool that he met with Shuter, and experienced his kindly attentions. The demon of theatrical mania took possession of his soul, and he is said to have played sundry characters, of small repute, for eighteenpence per night. From Liverpool he repaired to Rochdale,† where he had relations, and joined a strolling company. A laughable circumstance is related of this company, which

* The late Mr. Pope presented me with the cash-book of this office, which had somehow fallen into his hands. Munden's salary is there entered at ten shillings and sixpence a-week; it does not appear to have been suffered to remain long in arrear. —T. S. M.

† Mr. Munden had a near relative at Rochdale, who was

took place during the performance of the Fair Penitent. In the scene where Calista is seated in all the dignity of grief, beside the clay-cold corse of the false Lothario, it unfortunately happened, that the person who lay as the lifeless form of the gay perfidious, was neither more nor less than a footman in the neighbourhood. His master happened accidentally to be at the theatre, and presented himself behind the stage to the great discomfiture of poor John, who, hearing his voice, speedily started up, to the surprise of the audience, and immediately took to his heels.

Munden returned to Liverpool, and remained for some time at the Town Clerk's office; but the fascinations of a stroller's life could not be resisted. With a guinea in his pocket he set off for Chester, and expended his last shilling for admittance to that theatre of which he afterwards became the proprietor. It is said that on leaving the house, he made a vow that he would one day be the manager. Some prophecies ensure their own fulfilment, for they direct the energies of powerful minds to a distinct object, when difficulty and doubt hang around

---

wealthy, and from whom he had large expectations. He did not leave him a farthing; and the reason, which was pretty well ascertained was, that Munden, in the fulness of his heart, invited him to the principal inn, and gave him a handsome dinner, which the careful tradesman considered was a wasteful expenditure.

them. Again he had recourse to his pen, and obtained employment in the office of a writing stationer. Here he met with a London acquaintance, who, not being flush of money, pledged his ring, and with the produce they repaired to Whitchurch, where they separated. From Whitchurch, Joe managed to reach (with some casual assistance) Birmingham, and again met with a friend, a supper, and a bed. He, then, by some means or other, contrived to get to Woodstock, where he was recognised by a person who had left Liverpool a few weeks before, in consequence of a law-suit, in which a verdict had been given against him. At Liverpool, this man followed the business of a gardener, which he quitted on that occasion, and had fled to this place, where, in the gardens of Blenheim, he again wielded the spade.

Much pleased at meeting Munden, owing to a grateful remembrance of services, which our hero, during the time he was clerk to the gentleman who defended his suit, had rendered him, he administered to his wants, and gave our adventurer a comfortable proof that good offices are not always forgotten. In the morning Joe pursued his journey. Nothing material happened for some days, till he fortunately met a friend near Acton, to whom he had written from Oxford to meet him on the road with money. Fortunately, it may be said, for a second day's travel and

fasting had nearly exhausted his strength, and he was just sinking beneath the pressure of hunger and fatigue.

His checquered journey complete, for some time the quill supplied the means of subsistence, until the long vacation of attornies and all dependent on them, stopped for a time the course of cash,—that friend of all friends, without which none can be said to live. Munden, in later days, remembering his early distress, was accustomed to say, in the strong language which he sometimes used: "By G—d, Sir, a man's best friend is a guinea!"

At this moment of necessity, Munden became acquainted with the manager of a strolling company, then assembled at Letherhead, in Surrey: he entered his name among the list; and under the banner of this theatric monarch, he set off, possessed of the amazing sum of *thirteen pence.*

As the reader may reasonably suppose, the thirteen pence was nearly exhausted in a journey of eighteen miles. He found the theatre a barn,—the stage manager making the necessary arrangements, whilst the prompter was occupied in sweeping down the cobwebs, and clearing away the refuse of corn and straw on the floor. Munden wanted money: the manager had none, and the actor's watch was pawned for support.

The following night was appointed for a

performance ; the rehearsal over, the barn floor cleared, planks erected, and saw-dust strewed for the expected company : but in vain was the barn floor cleared, in vain the saw-dust strewed,—the audience were—nil !

At length a play was bespoke by a gentleman in the neighbourhood for Saturday night, which being a night of fashion, the audience assembled, and the profits of the evening allowed to each performer *six shillings !* besides having paid off incidental expenses incurred by the failure of the two unfortunate nights. To this good luck may be added the saving of two small pieces of candle. This was the maximum of money Joe Munden had yet gained by acting ; but such amazing good fortune could not be expected to last long. The theatre, after this, was poorly attended ; and had it not been for a custom* which prevailed among itinerant companies, of the performers delivering the play-bills themselves round the neighbourhood, and who, on such occasions, were styled

* A near relative of the writer, a great many years ago, saw the afterwards celebrated and wealthy Mrs. Siddons walking up and down both sides of a street, in a provincial town, dressed in a red woollen cloak, such as was formerly worn by menial servants, and knocking at each door to deliver the play-bill of her benefit. Roger Kemble, the father, was Manager of a Strolling Company, in which Mr. and Mrs. Siddons performed. The Company consisted principally of the Kemble family.

orators, and for which service he gained one shilling, poor Munden would have sunk into his former distress.

The theatre was burnt down. Joseph wrote a petition in the best style of Tomkins, and a collection was made, which amounted to between twenty and thirty pounds. The manager dealt five shillings a-piece to about twelve members, and, under the pretence of going to London to furnish a wardrobe for the Guilford Theatre, left a part of his troop at Letherhead, in vain to expect his return.

Munden's next performance was at Wallingford in Berkshire; thence to Windsor and Colnbrook: here again the manager deserted his company. He then returned, like the prodigal son, to the abode of his parents; but the fatal bias still existing, he performed in private plays at the Haymarket Theatre.

At one of these representations, Hurst, the Canterbury manager, saw his promise, and engaged him for the season. At this period (1780) Munden began to emerge from his difficulties. The line he was to figure in was that of second parts in tragedy and comedy; but for want of a comedian, he was persuaded to attempt the first line in low comedy. His success was equal to his wishes, and he left Canterbury with the good will and applause of its inhabitants.

His companion from Canterbury was Mr. Swords, subsequently of the Haymarket Theatre, who, after enacting Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and the tyrant Richard at the Canterbury theatre, was obliged, with Munden, to take his passage from that city to London in a cart. In the course of their journey, the former exclaimed, "Tap my eyes—when you are at Covent-Garden and I at Drury-lane (for you know we shall be too eminent to be both retained by one house), what will the theatrical biographers say, when they hear that the great Billy Swords and the great Joe Munden rode from Canterbury to London in a *cart*." Swords had but one pair of boots, which, when of red morocco, had graced the boards, but were now blackened for general use. Time having done his worst with them, they were daily taken to the cobbler for repair. One day when the little drab girl who conveyed them approached the cobbler's stall, he took up his last in anger, shook it at her, and bade her begone; swearing he would have the job no more, as he lost money by the time expended on the reparation.

Munden afterwards went to Brighton, where again he met with indulgence and patronage. About this time a performer of some consequence in the company of Messrs. Austin and Whitlock, at Chester, dying, Munden was ap-

plied to; the proferred terms were accepted, and he supplied the place of the deceased comedian. From Chester he went to Whitehaven by sea, his finances not permitting him to go by land. Here success still followed him. From Whitehaven the company repaired to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. After a stay of three months, he visited Lancaster and Preston. He likewise played at Manchester, still rising in the estimation of his audience.

He had engaged as a performer with a low salary, but his general good conduct, attention to the business of the theatre, and evident ability, raised him high in the estimation of the Chester audience. A gentleman, whose memory is still highly esteemed in Chester, and who survived to see his protegé in the highest rank of his profession, lent him the money to purchase Mr. Austin's share (that gentleman being desirous of retiring) of the circuit of the theatres, of which Chester formed the principal. The money was punctually repaid. Munden thus became joint-manager and lessee, with Mr. Whitlock, of the Chester, Newcastle, Lancaster, Preston, Warrington, and Sheffield theatres. Mr. Austin continued to reside at Chester as a private gentleman. It is a singular circumstance, that, many years afterwards, after having been widely separated, the three managers took up their abode in the same village—Kentish-Town, near London.

Never has it been the fortune of a provincial (and seldom of a metropolitan) theatre to possess such a company of able actors, as were then on the boards of the Chester theatre.

The principal tragedian was George Frederick Cooke,* a name afterwards so renowned, then in the prime of life; with powers said to be superior to those he afterwards evinced, and a voice as mellifluous as it became, in the end, hoarse from intemperance. Mrs. Whitlock was the tragic heroine. This lady is reported to have trodden closely in the steps of her sister Mrs. Siddons, whom she greatly resembled in her commanding figure, dignified attitude, and expressive intonation, but she was not handsome. Mrs. Whitlock subsequently appeared on the London boards, but was borne down by the surpassing talent of the greatest of past and present actresses, as her brother Charles was, for many years, eclipsed

* Cooke had then begun to indulge in his favourite propensity. On the occasion of the company's removal from one town to another, Cooke accompanied Mrs. Munden in a post-chaise. He was exceedingly sentimental; decried the fatal effects of liquor. "Never, my dear Mrs. Munden," said he, "permit my friend Joe to drink to excess, but above all things make him refrain from spirits: brandy and water has been my bane." They separated for the night to their different quarters. In the morning Cook did not come to rehearsal. Search was made after him in every direction; and, with some difficulty, he was discovered lying dead drunk on the floor of a subterranean wine vault.

by the superior genius of John Kemble. There is a portrait of Mrs. Whitlock in Bell's British Theatre, in Margaret of Anjou. She afterwards went to America, where she was a great favourite, and amassed a handsome fortune. The chief comedian was Joseph Shepherd Munden, then remarkably good-looking, and in the full possession of buoyant spirits and exuberant humour. Mr. Whitlock performed the lighter parts in comedy, Mr. Hodgkinson, played those parts which Lewis and Jones represented on the London boards, and is said to have been little inferior to those excellent actors. Mr. Austin,* who formed one of the company when Munden first joined it, had been greatly in the confidence of Garrick, who trusted to him not only in matters of a professional nature, but as a private

* Austin used to relate, that in walking up the stage with Garrick, until the burst of applause which followed one of his displays in Lear should subside, the great actor thrust his tongue in his cheek, and said, with a chuckle, "Joe, this is stage feeling." In like manner, Mrs. Siddons, after rushing off the stage in, apparently, the most excruciating anguish, in Belvidera, or Mrs. Beverly, was accustomed to walk quietly to the green-room, thrusting up her nose enormous quantities of snuff with the greatest nonchalance imaginable. After commending Kelly's acting in the Deserter, she gravely added, "but, Kelly, you *feel* too much: if you feel so strongly, you will never make an actor." True it is, that an actor who plays from feeling, will play worse at every successive representation, until he will be unable to act at all.

friend. Mr. Austin excelled in the part of Lord Ogleby. It must be presumed that he was not an ordinary actor, since he had played Edgar to Garrick's Lear. He was the last surviving hero of the Rosciad, in which he is immortalised by one line:

"Austin would always glisten in French silks."

Among the actresses was Miss Butler, whose history will be related hereafter, and Mrs. Hun, the mother of the celebrated George Canning. This lady, whose maiden name was Costello, occasioned, by her marriage with the father of Mr. Canning, a breach between that gentleman and his relatives which was never healed: he entered in the Temple, but died in indifferent circumstances. Her second husband was Mr. Reddish of Covent Garden Theatre, and her third Mr. Hun, by whom she had two daughters. Being unsuccessful in business, they resorted to the stage for subsistence,—Mr. Canning being then a boy at school, under the protection of his uncle. Mr. Munden was god-father to one of the daughters. Mr. Canning, on his secession from office, in 1802, became entitled to a retiring pension and settled it on his relatives. It is honourable to the memory of that great Statesman, that, amidst his struggles for political advancement, and the bitter warfare of party animosity, he never forgot his duty to his

mother. He duly corresponded with her, never omitting to write to her on Sunday, which he set aside for that purpose, as the only day he could count a leisure one. So invariably punctual was he, that, during his mission to Lisbon, not being always able to transmit his letters regularly, he still continued to write, and sent sometimes two letters by the same packet. Mrs. Hun is dead; but the letters are probably in existence: it is to be hoped they will, at some future period, be given to the world, divested, of course, of all matters of a personal or confidential nature. We ought not to lose "one drop of that immortal man." Mrs. Hun was an indifferent actress, but a sensible and well-informed woman.

Mrs. Sparkes performed the characters of old women. This lady subsequently played at the Lyceum and Drury-lane. She was inferior in her line only to Mrs. Mattocks and Mrs. Davenport.

There was another actress, of whom mention must be made, as she exercised a large influence over the fortunes of Munden. She played under the name of Mrs. Munden, but her real name was Mary Jones. She possessed some beauty, but was vulgar and illiterate in the extreme. In the wild thoughtlessness of youth, when the looseness of his habits did not afford an introduction to respectable female society, Munden had formed a connection with this

woman. When he had a settled abode at Chester, he sent for her, and had the imprudence to introduce her as his wife. By his consummate skill in his profession he had contrived to instruct her sufficiently to render her competent to play minor parts, and to prevent an exposure of her ignorance on the stage. By Mary Jones, Munden had four daughters, when the event took place which we are now about to relate.

In the year 1789, this wretched female, with whom he had so long cohabited, and who had borne him so many children, eloped with Mr. Hodgkinson, carrying with her thirty guineas of his money, his daughter Esther, and a child yet unborn. Munden had long suspected that some familiarities existed between the parties, and had called Mr. Hodgkinson to account, but the fact was denied. A vile scrawl which she left behind her, addressed to Mr. Whitlock, apprized Munden of the step which she had taken. After many entreaties to soothe and calm him, which, indeed, were not needed, she adds—"I likewise inclose a leter wich I beg give him—also the lisd of his property—with many thanks for your frenship for 9 years." Mr. Hodgkinson also wrote to Mr. Whitlock, attempting to justify his own conduct, and throw the blame on Munden. This precious couple were married at Bath, the female being in the last state of pregnancy; but Hodgkinson

soon found out what a bargain he had got, and separated from her at Bristol, embarking for America with an actress of the name of Brett. Previous to his departure, he addressed a letter to Munden, begging him to take care of the children:—Mrs. Hodgkinson had been delivered at Bristol of a boy, which she christened Valentine Joseph. Hodgkinson stated candidly, that his wife, "by the worst temper in the world, had brought misery on them both," and added, "Justice demands I should acknowledge it (the connection) has terminated as it ought, and I dare say as it was expected." Many years afterwards, the lady who became Mrs. Munden, taking her seat in a box at her husband's benefit, observed a face that was familiar to her close by her side: it was Hodgkinson. He did not recognise her, and she immediately removed to another box. He had returned from America, where he had played with great success; but soon afterwards went back, and died there. The poor creature he left behind at Bristol was taken dangerously ill, and became penitent. In her last moments she begged a person with whom she had lodged to write to Mrs. Munden, which was done in these terms:—"Before she died, she told me that I should soon come to her funeral. She said, 'You will some time have an opportunity of letting the injured Munden know how sensible I am of my ingratitude to him. Oh!

say 'tis the greatest affliction I labour under: sure he will forgive me! And to that amiable woman, who is a mother to my children, tell her my prayers are daily, nay hourly, sent up for her happiness.' " To the credit of Munden be it said, that he supplied her with money during her illness, paid for her burial, and took care of the two children, whom he sent to be nursed at Newcastle with their infant sisters.

This event had well nigh shaken Munden's popularity at Chester, as it drew aside the veil of his pretended matrimony. He acted, however, like a man of sense and determination;—attempted no pursuit—admitted his error—and set about repairing it, by getting married in earnest. His choice fell on Miss Butler, a young actress of merit, and considerable personal attractions, who had been some time in the company.

Miss Frances Butler had been born to affluence. She was a lineal descendant from Wollaston, the author of the " Religion of Nature," and consequently nearly related to Dr. Wollaston, head master of the Charter-House, and Dr. Wollaston, the great chemist, the discoverer of the metals palladium and rhodium, and the method of rendering platina malleable. Her father, a private gentleman of landed property, usually resided at one of his estates near Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. He had two sons apprenticed

at Birmingham. When they were out of their time he was induced, with the view of bringing them forward in the world, to remove to Birmingham, and enter into trade as what was there termed a merchant, taking them, and another person acquainted with the business, into partnership. The extravagance of the former, and ill conduct of the latter, soon brought him into the *Gazette*. He staid some time at Litchfield and then repaired to London, where he shortly afterwards died. Miss Butler maintained her mother by working at millinery and embroidery. She was at length persuaded by some friends to try the stage, and made her first appearance at the Lewes Theatre, on the 28th July, 1785, as Louisa Dudley, in the "West Indian." Osborn, the Lewes manager, afterwards obtained the Coventry Theatre. Miss Butler, being thus thrown among her father's old connections, was much patronized at her benefit. She was afterwards engaged, at the particular instance of some respectable townspeople at Birmingham, by the celebrated comedian, Yates,* the manager there; subse-

* Miss Butler called on Yates at his residence at Pimlico. The manager requested a specimen of her abilities. After she had recited a speech, Yates repeated the speech himself, commenting as he went on. On a sudden the folding-doors were burst open, and in rushed Mrs. Yates. She was one of the greatest of Mrs. Siddons' predecessors, and had been the rival of Mrs. Crawford. Turning to her husband, she said, in an angry tone, "What do you teach the young woman in that

quently at Lichfield, where she received much kindness from Miss Seward, the distinguished poetess; and was favoured with a letter of introduction from Mr. George Garrick, brother to the Roscius, for the purpose of presenting a MS. play. When she had an opportunity of delivering the letter to Mr. Garrick, at his house in the Adelphi, that eminent man had retired from all interference with theatricals. He told Miss Butler that he had not recommended a play to the theatre since the appearance of Miss Hannah More's "Percy." He conversed with her for a considerable time, and with great affability. She had also an interview with Mr. Sheridan on the same subject. Her last removal was to the company of Messrs. Austin and Whitlock, where she met with Mr. Munden. In all these journeys, and during all her performances, she was accompanied by, and watched over with parental care by her mother. Munden was united in marriage to Miss Butler, at the Parish Church of St. Oswald, in Chester, on the 20th of October, 1789, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock. Whilst absent on the wedding excursion, Mrs. Munden's mother, from whom she had not been separated before for years,

foolish way for? Listen, Miss; speak the speech as I pronounce it:" and, though then a coarse old woman, bedaubed with rouge, she delivered it with an energy which proved that the fire of genius was not all extinguished.

was suddenly taken ill at Chester, and died. Her affectionate daughter, in a diary of that date, bitterly laments that she was not present to close her eyes, terming herself "a bride and orphan within a month!" After her marriage, Mrs. Munden quitted the stage.

By his wife Munden had two children—a boy who died an infant and is buried at Lancaster, and the writer of the present narrative: but Mrs. Munden, compassionating the helpless condition of her husband's illegitimate children, and the prospect of their being consigned to obscurity, not many years afterwards took them to her home, tended them in infancy, like her own offspring, saw that they were properly educated, and, by her respectable sanction, elevated them to a station in society, through which two of the daughters formed happy and wealthy alliances in marriage. One of them, who died some years ago, was a lady of extreme beauty and most amiable disposition. Valentine, the son, an ingenuous and brave young man, rose to the rank of chief mate in the East India Company's naval service. Although in a merchantman, he was three times in action. He ruptured a blood vessel off Saint Helena, whilst in the active discharge of his duty in command of the vessel during a gale of wind; was landed on the island, and, dying soon afterwards, was followed to his grave by the military and naval officers on

the station. No stone or monument marks the spot where his remains rest, though something of the kind might have been looked for at the hands of those connected with him by the ties of relationship. These children, of whom only one survives, testified a grateful sense of the obligations they were under to Mrs. Munden, with one exception*.

Returning to Chester, Munden, who had led hitherto a free life, now moored "in the calm haven of domestic bliss," settled down into quiet habits. The theatre was profitable, and he began to save money. He received great attention from the neighbouring gentry: amongst other compliments paid to him was an invitation from the late Earl Grosvenor to some private theatricals at Eaton Hall. He used to describe these performances as ludicrous in the extreme. The noble actors and actresses, accustomed to tread in drawing rooms with perfect ease, no sooner found themselves on the stage than they were thoroughly embarrassed: they did not know what to do with their arms, and could not contrive to get off the stage with-

* Truth obliges me to state that the exception is the survivor,—a lady of fortune, who, when her benefactress was laboring under the affliction of blindness, and extreme old age (she was then above 80), neither visited nor enquired after her, for some years previous to her death, nor sought her forgiveness in her dying moments! T. S. M.

out turning their backs to the audience. Even Lord Belgrave (the present Marquis of Westminster), then an elegant young man, in addressing the audience to apologize for a delay in the performance, occasioned by the detention of some of the aristocratical performers in a snow storm, committed the *gaucherie* of commencing with "Gentlemen and Ladies;" but Munden said he played very well, and he was the only one that did so. It is to be hoped that the theatricals at Bridgewater House are better managed; otherwise Mrs. Bradshaw must be sadly confused. An illustrious personage is said to have enquired of one of the colleagues of an amiable and intelligent nobleman who is fond of acting, what sort of an actor he was? "A very bad one, Madam," is the reported reply of the Minister; "*Ne sutor, &c.*"

In 1790 died, the, as he is called in the records of the times, "inimitable Edwin." Very little is preserved which can give us a notion of his peculiar qualities. A writer, who seems to understand his subject, describes him as "a thin, tidy, dollish kind of man, with a quizzical, drollish air. He acted a sort of Fribble, a weak-headed dandy of those times. There was a quaintness about his manner which took possession of the town, although, in general, he played solely to the upper classes—the gallery." He must have

been much better than this criticism describes, for few comedians ever carried the town so far with them as Edwin did. It is undoubted that he was one of the best comic singers that ever trod the stage. The subjoined original letter will show that he was not a man of much education or refined feeling* He is said to have been as fond of raising the glass to his lips as Cooke was.

The late Stephen Kemble once asked rather jesuitically, if Cooke did not owe much of his celebrity to this vice and his utter disdain of public opinion. There might be something in this insinuation. The crowds who flocked to see Richard the Third, and Sir

---

* DEAR MARY,

I wrote to you by the post before dinner to-day, in answer to your letter of eleven o'clock this morning, but fearing, as I wrote it in a hurry, I might say something to displease you, I write again to request the favor of your company at Mrs. P—'s to night to explain myself, and you may rest assured I will not say anything to displease you. I wish to explain myself entirely to you. I am not in the farce, and will go to Leicester Street as soon as I have finished in the play. Your letter has made me unhappy. Oh, dearest love, think how much I esteem and admire you. I would do every thing for you. I love and adore you. My heart bleeds when I reflect on your displeasure, and can never be happy but in your smiles. Reflect on my truth and love, and be certain of my honor and my friendship. Do not be so easy to be offended. Come to me, and continue to love.

EDWIN.

*Tuesday, Six o'clock.*

To the only one that is loved by EDWIN.

Pertinax Macsycophant were always in doubt whether they should have value for the price of their admission; since it was an even chance that, before the curtain rose, an apology would be made for Mr. Cooke, who was suffering under "violent spasms." This, unquestionably, created excitement, and rendered him a rarity, which his more regular rival, Kemble, was not. When he *did* appear, the rapture of the audience knew no bounds. In a similar way Edwin, as is described by the writer before referred to, "was brought to the stage door, senseless and motionless, at the bottom of a chaise. Brandon was then called in as practising physician. If they could put on him the proper dress, and push him to the lamps he rubbed his stupid eyes for a minute; consciousness and quaint humour awoke together; and he seemed to play the better for it." Be that as it may, the public thought Edwin a great actor, and great without doubt he was, for the public are seldom wrong.*

---

* The *Gazetteer*, and *New Daily Advertiser* for Friday, 26th November, 1790, contains the following:—

LINES EXTEMPORE ON THE DEATH OF EDWIN.

Here, master of the comic art,
Who ne'er in vain that art applied,
Lies Edwin! finish'd now his part,
He gave but sorrow when he died.

This huge void in the green-room it seemed impossible to fill. It happened that Mr. Const, (the late chairman of the Clerkenwell Sessions) who held a share in Covent Garden theatre, had a *liaison* with Miss Chapman, an actress respectable in her line. Miss Chapman, having frequently played with Munden in the country, spoke warmly of his merits, and strongly pressed Mr. Const to engage Munden to supply the place of Edwin. Mr. Const wrote to the country manager to offer him £4, £5, and £6 per week; the answer, as reported in Mr. Bunn's book is perfectly true: "I cant think of it, Sir; it is too much, it is indeed. I shall never be able to gain you as much." Miss Chapman's friendship went further. She remonstrated with her friend, and strongly urged that to render the new actor

---

Failings he proved—the human lot,
Let pity shed a kindly tear;
For ah! when these shall be forgot,
Shall mirth hang drooping o'er his bier.

Too late departed worth we prize,
To living merit oft unkind;
Regret exclaims with sad surprise,
He has not left his like behind.

The same newspaper contains an announcement underneath the Covent Garden Bill; "On Thursday, Mr. Munden will make his first appearance on this stage, in the characters of Sir Francis Gripe, and Jemmy Jumps, in the comedy of the Busy Body, and the opera of the Farmer."

of value to the theatre, he ought to have more, at least sufficient to entitle him to the entrée of the principal green-room. The salary, it is believed, was finally fixed at £8 per week. Munden came to London with his wife, having previously disposed of his share in the country theatres to Mr. Stephen Kemble. He took lodgings at the corner of Portugal Street, Clare Market,—now a coal-shed. Here, again, Miss Chapman's foresight interposed. She called upon him on his arrival, and looking round the rooms, said: "Munden, you must not live here, these lodgings are not sufficiently respectable for you." He, consequently, removed to Catherine Street, in the Strand, where he occupied apartments at the house of Mr. Steel, who was afterwards so barbarously murdered on Hounslow Heath.

Munden determined to "take the bull by the horns," as the phrase is, and at once to measure his strength with the memory of the defunct comedian in one of his best parts.*

---

* The annexed is a copy of the original play bill:—

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

This present Thursday, Dec. 2, 1790, will be presented a Comedy, called

THE BUSY BODY.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Marplot,* | Mr. Lewis. |
| *Sir G. Airy,* | Mr. Holman. |
| *Sir Jealous Traffic,* | Mr. Thompson. |
| *Charles Gripe,* | Mr. Macready. |

On entering upon the stage he was received with much applause, which he bore with great presence of mind; but was for a moment disconcerted by observing an old Newcastle acquaintance in the centre of the pit, standing on the bench, waving, in the enthusiasm of the moment, his wig above his head, and bawling out, "Bravo, Joe Munden!" This well meaning person had, previously, made his way to his dressing-room whilst the new actor was

---

| | |
|---|---|
| *Whisper*, | Mr. Bernard. |
| *Sir Francis Gripe*, | Mr. Munden. |
| (Being his first appearance in that character.) | |
| *Isabinda*, | Mrs. Mountain. |
| *Patch*, | Mrs. Harlowe. |
| *Scentwell*, | Mrs. Platt. |
| *Miranda*, | Mrs. Pope. |
| (Being her first appearance in that character.) | |

End of the Play, a Dance, called

THE WAPPING LANDLADY.

To which will be added the Comic Opera of

THE FARMER.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Jemmy Jumps*, | Mr. Munden. |
| *Valentine*, | Mr. Johnstone. |
| *Rundy*, | Mr. Blanchard. |
| *Dormant*, | Mr. Hull. |
| *Fairly*, | Mr. Thompson. |
| *Farmer Stubble*, | Mr. Powell. |
| *Blackberry* (first time), | Mr. Bannister. |
| *Molly Maybush*, | Mrs. Martyr. |
| *Louisa*, | Mrs. Mountain. |
| *Landlady*, | Mrs. Platt. |
| *Betty Blackberry*, | Mrs. Mattocks. |

dressing in a state of nervous excitement, and bursting in, addressed him in these terms, giving him a hearty slap on the shoulder by way of encouragement: "Now, Joey, my boy, shew-em what thee art, for the honor of Newcastle!" The success of the debutant is thus described by Mr. Boaden (Life of Kemble):—

"On December 2, 1790, Mr. Munden, an actor of great provincial celebrity, made his first bow at Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of Sir Francis Gripe, in the Busy Body. Since the days of Shuter nothing had been so rich, for Wilson was not a tythe of him; and his mind seemed teeming with every surprise of comic humour, which his features expressed by an incessant diversity of playful action, and his utterance conveyed in an articulation of much force and neatness. He was received by a very crowded house with triumphant applause; and, with the proper confidence of a great master of his art, he acted in the farce also, the facetious Jemmy Jumps. Here he felt some alarm from the recent impression of poor Edwin; but he was above imitation, and played from himself so peculiarly and divertingly that he pleased even those who could not think him equal to Edwin; and although the latter was a master in musical science, Munden sang the 'Fair-haired Lassie' in a style so powerful, as to shew that burletta had gained in him nearly as much as comedy."

A more moderate criticism is given in a cotemporary newspaper, the *Public Advertiser* of Dec. 3, 1790:—

COVENT GARDEN.

"Mr. Munden, a gentleman who had acquired much celebrity in many of the provincial theatres for his comic talents, yesterday made his first appearance in the character of Sir

Francis Gripe, in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of the 'Busy Body,' and in Jemmy Jumps, in the 'Farmer.'

"Mr. Munden evinced a considerable share of ability in Sir Francis Gripe, and though labouring under the disadvantages of a muscular form, joined to a powerful voice, contrived to make a very favourable impression upon the audience. His conception of the character was correct, and he played in a style of chaste and dry humour, rather than with great force of comic colouring.

"Mr. Munden afterwards appeared in Jemmy Jumps. To follow the late Mr. Edwin with success, extraordinary talents are requisite. This gentleman, considering the great drawback the name of his predecessor will have upon the performance of the person who succeeds him, made a very tolerable stand in the character. In some parts he reminded us strongly of the original, and in others he played from himself, and with deserved applause. His tavern scene, in particular, was excellently acted.

"Upon the whole, we think this gentlemen will prove an useful addition to the company, though we do not think his abilities of that very powerful nature which the sanguine reports of his friends had given us reason to expect. He was extremely well received by a most numerous and elegant audience."

**Munden's success was, indeed, complete and immediate. The public and the critics were alike satisfied. Of the latter, Anthony Pasquin alone carped; and wrote an epigram, in the last line of which he asserted,—**

"He is neither the Quick nor the dead." *

* Of course this allusion was to Quick and Edwin. Anthony Pasquin, (or as his real name was) John Williams, was the most degraded of human beings; he wrote only for the

The actors hailed him as a brother. The veteran comedian King, writing shortly after-

---

purpose of extorting money, and defamed every thing and every body that was venerable in the land. He published the "Children of Thespis," a bad imitation of Churchill's "Rosciad," and gave to the world from time to time extracts from a MS. poem, entitled the "Kembliad," which he pretended to have written, no doubt in the hope of forcing a bribe from Mr. Kemble for its suppression; a hope which, assuredly, he did not realize. Mr. Adolphus states, that after partaking of John Bannister's hospitality, he proceeded to some den in the neighbourhood to pen a foul attack on him. He wrote to Mrs. Martyr, with a threat, for a set of shirts, and obtained them. He had the impudence to bring an action against Mr. Gifford for a libel on him in the Baviad, or the Mæviad, which alluded to "the rank fume of Tony Pasquin's brains;" but got so severely handled by Garrow, that he judged it expedient to proceed to the United States of America. Cobbett, who was there at the time, enacting Peter Porcupine, alludes in language, as coarse as the subject he treated of, to his arrival: "They tell me that dirty fellow, Anthony Pasquin, has come here. I have often heard say, that people like their own stink, but I never heard they liked another's stink, so I trust they will drag him through the Hudson, to make him clean before they allow him to land." Williams afterwards returned to England,—abused Sir Walter Scott and Edmund Kean, until the newspapers would have nothing to do with him. He died in a garret near Tottenham-court-road. From Munden he never got a farthing, though he afterwards paid much court to him. It was Munden's habit never to reply to a newspaper attack. "If I do," he said, very sensibly, "I play into their hands, and raise a nest of hornets around me. If I do not, they'll fall upon somebody else to-morrow, and I shall be forgotten."

wards to Mr. Austin, spoke of him in these terms:—"Munden is a great favourite with the public, and with me also, but they have given him a hint lately about *improving* Shakespeare in Dogberry."

Thus was the highest object attained which a provincial actor covets,—to fill first rate parts on the London boards, and to have his merits appreciated by the acknowledged criterion of English taste.

## CHAPTER II.

Munden's Competitors—Second-rate parts—Cockletop and Elia—Tippy Bob—The Road to Ruin—Munden's first great original part—Criticisms on his acting in Old Dornton—Conviviality in the last century—Munden's Polonius—Mrs. Inchbald—O'Keefe—Munden and Bannister chosen Parish Constables—The Supper Club—Lord Barrymore—Peter Pindar's Epigram—A troublesome neighbour—Munden's house on fire—Removal to Kentish Town—The Jolly Thieves—A pleasant party in Bow Street—A careful servant and another fire—George the Third and Captain Fraser—John Kemble, Colman and the Iron Chest—Munden, Kemble and Falstaff—Caustic, Brummagem, and old Rapid—Death of Mrs. Pope and retirement of Miss Farren.

MUNDEN found Mr. Quick in possession of the best parts, as was justly his due, from priority, admitted talent, and high favour with the public. At Covent Garden was, also, Wilson: at Drury Lane, King, Parsons, and Suett,—fearful competitors to contend with: however, he studied carefully, played what was set down for him, and lost no ground. It is a great mistake of actors to suppose that they derogate from their station in playing, occasionally, second rate characters. In some instances there may be reasons for such a belief. Cooke used to remark, that in playing

Iago to John Kemble's Othello, he felt the difficulty of making a point. "It seemed to me," he said, "as if I were a snail, which, endeavouring to issue from its shell, finds a large stone impeding its progress." Without taking into account the great powers of his antagonist, and the disparity between the parts, it must be admitted by all who witnessed Mr. Cooke's performance, that, although displaying great vigour in a portion of it, it was an entire misconception of the character. It was the very reverse of "honest, honest Iago." His villany was so apparent that it degraded Othello from a confiding dupe to a credulous dotard. The spectators wondered that he could not discern what *they* saw—the manifest imposture. "If Cooke," said a gentleman of great experience in theatricals, on leaving the pit, "be right, Henderson must have been sadly mistaken." Setting aside this digression, it is really of benefit to a good actor to play at times an inferior part. Granting that vanity be wounded, the public perceive that the talent which produces such effect, where they have been accustomed to witness inanity, must be extraordinary, and the whole *tableau* is complete; the actors play up to each other, and wonderful is the emulation, when the one in the superior part feels him in the inferior treading on his kibe. Murray's performance of the old man in the "Stranger," and (the

late) Mr. Macready's delivery of the few speeches in the small part of the Hosier, in "The Road to Ruin," were cases in point;—they could not have obtained more applause had they played Alexander the Great. Munden, after filling equal parts with his great rivals, played, without a murmur, the first carrier in "Henry IV.," to Wilson's Falstaff.

On the 4th Feb., 1791, he performed his first original part, Sir Samuel Sheepy, in the "School for Arrogance," by Holcroft. Holcroft's politics, and an impression that Mr. Harris was unfavourable to him, induced him to request Marshall to father the piece. Feb. 16, he played Lazarillo, in "Two Strings to your bow," "never before acted in this kingdom." March 14th, Frank, in "Modern Antiques," a new farce by O'Keefe. Cockletop, by Mr. Quick. Munden's excellence in Cockletop, which he, and he only, performed in later days, is recorded in a chapter by Charles Lamb, in language as eloquent as the criticism is just and discriminative. It is useless to transcribe it, for who has not read Elia? Mr. Lamb sent Munden the book with the annexed inscription:—

Mr. Lamb presents his respects to Mr. Munden, and begs his acceptance of a volume, at the end of which he has ventured a faint description of the pleasure he received from Mr. Munden's acting.

20, *Great-Russell-street, Covent-Garden.*

His next parts were Lovel, in "High Life Below Stairs," and the 16th April, another original part, Ephraim Smooth, in "Wild Oats," by O'Keefe, produced by Lewis for his benefit; May 2, Cassander, in "Alexander the Little," for Quick's benefit; for Johnstone's benefit, Pedrillo, in "The Castle of Andalusia;" Mrs. Martyr's benefit, Daphne, in "Midas Reversed," and Sir David Drowsy, in the "Dreamer Awake;" Miss Brunton's benefit, Tipple, in "The Flitch of Bacon;" Wilson's benefit, Young Quiz, in "Union, or St. Andrew's Day," a farce written by Wilson himself; May 19th, for his own benefit, Caleb, in "He would be a Soldier," and, Darby, in "Love in a Camp;" in "Primrose Green," a farce not printed, for Mr. and Mrs. Bernard; June 6th, Camillo, in the "Double Falsehood." At this period, Drury Lane was pulled down for rebuilding, and the company performed at the King's Theatre (Opera House). Sept. 12th, Munden played, first time, Ennui, in "The Dramatist." "The General Evening Post," a newspaper of that period, alludes to his performance in these terms:—"Munden had frequent applause in the performance of his new character, Ennui, which he sustained with more ease and discrimination than his predecessor." Fawcett, from the York Theatre, made his first appearance in Caleb, (He would be a Soldier.) Munden, subsequently, played

the Gentleman Usher, in "King Lear;" Lord Jargon, in "Notoriety," a new comedy, by Reynolds; Lopez, in "Lover's Quarrels;" Mustapha, in "A Day in Turkey;" and, Tippy Bob,* in "Blue Beard, or the Flight of Harlequin:" Jan. 6th, 1792, the second Witch, in "Macbeth;" Meadows, in the "Deaf Lover;" Sebastian, in "The Midnight Hour."

On the 18th February, was performed, for the first time, "The Road to Ruin," by Holcroft; and Munden appeared in the part which formed the corner-stone of his fame. It is not generally known that the original title of this piece was "The City Prodigals." The manager, fearful of some party opposition, counselled an alteration of the title, and Holcroft, who, from the violent part he took in politics,

* There was a song called Tippy Bob, which Munden rendered very popular by his style of singing it; it ran as follows:—

My name is Tippy Bob,
With a watch in each fob,
View me round, view me round on each side and the top;
If I 'm not the thing,
May I wish I may swing,
Since I 've got such a nice natty crop, natty crop.

As I walk through the lobby,
The girls cry out "Bobby,
"Here Bobby—here Bobby—my tippety Bob;"
Such squeaking, such squalling,
Such pulling, such hauling,
Oh! I can't get them out of my nob, of my nob.

was in constant dread of an adverse audience (one of his pieces having been stopped until an assurance was given that it contained nothing political), readily consented to the alteration. The part of Old Dornton was sent to Mr. Quick—(the writer has it in his possession with Mr. Quick's name, and the original title of the play affixed); and Silky was assigned to Munden. As this was the first opportunity of making a hit in a strong original part, Munden studied it deeply and carefully, and told his wife he felt confident of the effect he could produce. Those who recollect his performance of Sir Francis Gripe, will readily believe that he had formed a just estimate of his conception. What was his mortification, when the part of Silky was withdrawn from him, and that of Old Dornton substituted! Mr. Quick, after much consideration, deemed it was too sentimental for his cast of characters, and, insisting upon the choice of parts, which was his undoubted right, selected Silky: he played it admirably. Munden, with vexation and regret, and many a violent ejaculation against the manager, received the new part, and, in bitterness of spirit, sate down to study it. He soon perceived the weapon he had within his grasp. All former triumphs he had achieved were whelmed in this great effort. The power—the pathos—the deep, intense feeling he threw into it, rendered it the chief,

the prominent part in the play. The original cast was as follows:—Goldfinch, Lewis; Old Dornton, Munden; Harry Dornton, Holman; Silky, Quick; Sulky, Wilson; Milford, Harley; Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Mattocks; Sophia, Mrs. Merry; Jenny, Mrs. Harlowe. "Munden," says the 'Public Advertizer' (February 20th, 1792), "gave some of the fatherly tints with great force and much judgment. The tears of beauty were the best possible proofs of his doing justice to the tender affection of a fond parent." At a later period, when, perhaps, his powers had become more mellow, he is thus described:—"His was an unique piece of acting; so full of feeling—so imbued, even in its most angry parts, with the milk of human kindness—that we despair of ever seeing its parallel. In some of his scenes, the indignant feelings of the man, softened down by the fond affection of the father—as oil thrown on the turbulent waves is said to moderate their fury—presented as fine a picture of undulating passion as the pathetic of comedy (the structure of our modern comedies will allow the expression) is susceptible of." The audience went with him. They saw, with astonishment, an actor, whose forte had been hitherto considered to be comedy,—broad comedy,—display the greatest power over the tragedy of domestic life. Holcroft, the author, who had remonstrated against entrusting his favourite

part to a comparatively untried actor, was surprised at the effect of his own composition. His perpetual attention to the man who had followed out his idea, perhaps beyond the bounds of his own conception, was such, that, when the Secretary of State issued the warrant for his apprehension on the silly charge of high treason, that functionary directed the officer to search for him at the residence of Mr. Munden. Munden, though never extreme in politics, was, at that time, a Whig, and wore the "blue and buff" of Fox; in which dress he is painted by Sir Martin Archer Shee. "The Road to Ruin" was repeated thirty-eight nights during the season, and was twice commanded by the King. Fawcett spoke the prologue.

As a London performer, he was now a "Star" of the first magnitude; and, in that capacity, was engaged during the vacation at the Dublin Theatre. At his benefit there he netted 250*l*. He afterwards visited his friends at Newcastle, and played there with acclamation. He was accustomed to say, that the first 100*l*. he realized he laid out in a pipe of port wine: perhaps it was a joke upon the bibacious propensity which was so much the fashion of the day. A host would have blushed at his own want of hospitality had he sent away his guests sober. He hid their hats, locked the doors, and detained them by force.

Austin once dined at the house of Mr. Bowes, who carried off Lady Strathmore. Being a domesticated man, he was desirous of quitting at a reasonable time. After earnestly remonstrating against the violence used to detain him, he at length lost all patience, took up a plate, threw it at a pier-glass, which was smashed in pieces, exclaiming, "Now, will you let me go?" His host, seeing him cast a menacing look at another in the room, threw down the key of the door, and called out, "Oh! by G—d, Austin, go as soon as you like." Jack Bannister dined with another madman, who, in his drunken fit, attempted to inflate a balloon in such a way as to occasion a sense of suffocation. The company rushed to the glass folding-doors, and burst them open: they fortunately opened upon a balcony. There were clubs at which fines were inflicted on any member who was not drunk when the sittings were closed;—whist clubs, where the members sate up to their knees in the rejected packs of cards, curtains being drawn between their faces to conceal any expression of disappointment at a bad hand. This practice is said to have been introduced in consequence of Mr. Fox losing a large sum of money by the cards being reflected on the bright surface of some large steel buttons which he wore. One of these card clubs had a singular constitution. It

was called "The Never-ending Club," and the law was, that no one should quit the table until relieved by the arrival of a fresh member. Days passed, and even nights; and the fresh dawn beheld the *parti carré*, after a snore or two, commencing a new game. They did not—

> "Carve at the meal
> With gloves of steel,
> And drink the red wine with their helmets barr'd."

But they did "carve at the meals," with dirty hands, which had so long thumbed the cards, and they "drank the red wine," with eyes half closed by exhaustion and the fever of gambling. We have lost much of the "wisdom of our ancestors," and this amongst the rest.

On the 26th March, 1792, Munden played Proteus, in a new piece for Mrs. Pope's benefit, and Nicholas in "Fashionable Levities," for Lewis's benefit. April 10, Aircastle, in "The Cozeners," for Quick's benefit. May 10, for his own benefit, Stave, in "The Clerk of the Village," and in a new piece, entitled "Just in time;" and recited "Jemmy Jumps in the Dumps," concluding with "The Deaf Lover." June 18, 1792. Munden's old friend, Mrs. Whitlock, made her first appearance at the Haymarket Theatre in the Queen—"Battle of Hexham." Sept. 17, Covent-Garden being rebuilt, the prices of the boxes were advanced to 6*s.*, pit 3*s.* 6*d.*, Gallery 2*s.* An upper gallery was afterwards added. The insane row

which took place at the next rebuilding, and which, in defiance of all law and justice, was permitted to take place in the English metropolis, did not then commence its disgraceful origin. Nov. 3, Munden played Peregrine Forester, in a new Farce called "Hartford Bridge," and Sir Anthony Absolute in "The Rivals." Dec. 8, Sir Francis Wronghead in "The Provoked Husband." Dec. 27, Polonius in "Hamlet." Mention is made of this part, as it was one of our actor's chastest performances. It had been the custom to represent Polonius as a buffoon: a more erroneous conception could not be entertained. Shakespeare intended him for a pliant and supple courtier, and man of the world, ready to accord with any one's opinion whom he deemed it expedient to flatter; but his advice to his son indicates sound sense and just reflection. Munden, apart from his humorous acquiescence in Hamlet's assumed vagaries, exhibited in his personification a venerable and dignified demeanour, which he imitated from old Lord Mansfield, "Murray the Polite." "Lady Macbeth," observed Lord Byron to Captain Medwin, "died with Mrs. Siddons, and Polonius will with Munden." At the conclusion of this year, 1792, we lose sight of Wilson. He is said to have died in the King's Bench in 1796. Munden succeeded to most of his characters, which formed a very wide range. Jan. 2, 1793, He played Hardcastle in "She Stoops to

Conquer." 16th. Don Jerome in "The Duenna." 29th. Was represented, for the first time, "Every One has his Fault," by Mrs. Inchbald; Sir Robert Ramble, Lewis; Harmony, Munden; Irwin, Pope; Lord Norland, Farren; Solus, Quick; Placid, Fawcett; Edward, Miss Grist; Miss Woodburn, Mrs. Exten; Lady Eleanor Irwin, Mrs. Pope; Miss Placid, Mrs. Mattocks; and Miss Spinster, Mrs. Webb. This comedy was excellently performed. Munden continued to play new parts in succession. For his own benefit (May 3, 1793), Robin Redhead, in (first time) "To Arms, or the British Recruit," with old Dornton and Lazarillo. May 11, was represented (first time) "Sprigs of Laurel," Nipperkin, Munden, a part he rendered famous. O'Keefe, the author, alluding to his own production, says, "Munden was very diverting in the most impudent, bold, audacious character, that I think was ever before any audience." This farce was revived at Covent-Garden, May 17, 1797, reduced to one act, and entitled "The Rival Soldiers." O'Keefe counted much on Munden in such parts as these; for he played up to the extravagance of the character. Strange that hyper-criticism should have discovered that this was over-acting. Who ever expects a caricaturist to be bound by the strict rules of painting? Most of the creations of O'Keefe could only be played in

this way, or could not be played at all. So sensible of this was the author, that he never augured well of a piece unless it was nearly damned the first night; if received with cold approbation he gave it up for lost. When the audience had pretty well hissed, they began to laugh at the oddity of the conception, and the next night roared with laughter. On one occasion, when Munden had an incipient attack of the gout, at his chambers in Clement's Inn, on the eve of a new play, O'Keefe called, with Mr. Harris, the Manager, and implored him, if possible, to play his part for one night, even though he resigned it the next day to an inferior performer. The actor consented; postponed the fit by the use of a violent remedy; got through the part with difficulty, and ensured the success of the piece.

The following dry enumeration of parts played, from the period of September, 1793, upwards, by Munden, is exhibited to show his activity, versatility, and quickness of study. Sept, 18, 1793, "Much Ado about Nothing," Dogberry, Quick; Town-Clerk, Munden, Verges, Fawcett. Oct. 18, Skirmish in the "Deserter." 19th, Peachum, in "The Beggar's Opera." 25th, Puzzle in "Grief à la Mode." Nov. 12, Old Grovely, in "The Maid of the Oaks." 23d, "The World in a Village" (first time), by O'Keefe,

Jollyboy, Munden. Jan. 1, 1794, Sir Andrew Acid, in "Notoriety." Jan. 2, "School for Wives," General Savage, Munden. Feb. 5, Craig Campbell in "Loves' Frailties," a new Comedy, by Holcroft. 22nd, Sydney, in (first time) "Travellers in Switzerland." April 7, For Mrs. Pope's benefit, was performed "The Jealous Wife," Oakly, Pope; Major Oakly, Quick; Charles, Holman; Sir Harry Beagle, Fawcett; Captain O'Cutter, Johnstone; Russet, Munden (being their first appearance in those characters); Lord Trinket, Lewis; Mrs. Oakly, Mrs. Pope; Lady Freelove, Mrs. Mattocks (first time); Harriet, Mrs. Mountain (first time); this, indeed, was a strong cast.

April 12, For Lewis' benefit, Trim in "Tristram Shandy." 29th, For Johnston's benefit, Joey, in "British Fortifications," never acted, and Old Pranks, in "The London Hermit." May 13, For his own benefit, "School for Wives," with, never acted, "The Packet Boat, or a Peep Behind the Veil,"—Quick, Johnston, Munden, Mrs. Martyr; after which, "British Fortitude" (fifth time). 22d, Speechless Wife,"—Quick, Munden, Incledon: this opera was damned. 23d, Mrs. Mountain's benefit, Lopez, in "Lovers' Quarrels. 28th, Middleton's benefit, Martin, in the "Sicilian Romance," never before acted. June 11th, Robin, in "The Waterman." Parsons died in Feb. 1795. He had played with Gar-

rick, and was one of his "children." He is represented by Zoffani, as one of the watchmen in the scene with Garrick as Sir John Brate, and the expression of his face is very comical. Parsons' chief forte was in old men in comedy, in which he greatly excelled. His best part was Corbaccio, which he played from the recollection of Shuter.

At this period Munden took a house in Frith-street, Soho. His next door neighbour was his friend Jack Bannister. They were chosen parish constables. With the whimsicality that attaches itself to the profession, they waited on the vestry, and were excused, by urging that their authority would not be respected; as the constant habit of appearing as Dogberry and Verges rendered them too comical for anything but stage exhibition. They established a kind of club, which met alternately at their respective houses. The actors came in the dresses they had worn during the performance at the theatres. Amongst their visitors were Colman, Peter Pindar, O'Keefe, Lord Barrymore, and Capt. Wathen. Here, Peter Pindar extemporised the following Epigram on O'Keefe, after the dramatist had quitted the room:—

Some say, O'Keefe, that thou art a thief,
And stealest half of thy works or more;
But I say, O'Keefe, thou can'st not be a thief,
For such stuff was ne'er written before.

The supper consisted of rump steaks and mutton chops; and the author's revered mother told him that she never saw anybody eat with more appetite than the luxurious prodigal, Lord Barrymore. So it is. Sweets produce satiety. A royal Epicure is said to have *fallen back* on mutton chops.

The man in this society, who was most talked of at the time, was Lord Barrymore. He was one of a motley trio known by the nicknames of Newgate, Cripplegate and Hellgate. His Lordship was the first; his successor, the next lord, who was lame,—the second; and the Honorable Augustus Barry, a clergyman, the third. The latter gentleman passed much of his time in prisons for debt. The two noblemen were both addicted to gambling; with this difference, that the first played to lose, and the second to win, and they both, by their several ways, succeeded in the attempt. The habit of extravagance was early fostered in Lord Barrymore. It is asserted that his grandmother, who doted on him, gave him when he went to Harrow a thousand pounds, just as a good-natured old woman would slip a crown piece into her darling's hands at parting. The freaks that this nobleman played have not been equalled in our days, so prolific in lordly riots; but it will always be the case, when young men of rank come early into the possession of their vast es-

tates without controul: the usurer supplies them at first with the ready means of folly, and when the rents are collected, there is no want of hangers-on; the very excesses they commit enable those scoundrels to take them unawares and secure their plunder.

Among the ingenious expedients which Lord Barrymore invented to ruin himself was,—drawing straws from a truss with the Prince of Wales; the holder of the longest straw to receive £1000. He gave a sumptuous entertainment at Ranelagh, to which it is said only himself and two other persons came —drove a tandem along the cliffs at Brighton close to the declivity: it was one of those high tandems, which Sir John Lade brought into vogue, and from which Lady Lade used to step into the first floor window. At the theatre in that town he played Harlequin, and jumped through a hoop. He was a very good comic actor, as may be seen from the representation of him in Bell's Theatre, in Scrub, with Captain Wathen in Archer; and, with all his wildness, at bottom a man of sense and education. In a company, where more than one literary man was present, it was proposed that each person should write an epigram, upon a given subject, within a very limited space of time, and Lord B. was the only one who accomplished it. He built a theatre at his seat at Wargrave, where he played, with other

amateurs, and occasional professional assistance. The whole audience were afterwards entertained at supper. His end was an untimely one. In stepping into his curricle to convey, as commanding officer of the militia in the district, some French prisoners from one depôt to another, he accidentally trod upon the lock of his carbine, and the contents lodged in his brain. He had not been many years of age, but he had contrived to dissipate an enormous fortune.

Munden was ejected from his house in Frith Street in a more summary way than he anticipated. An individual who lodged next door, the other side from Bannister, being a friend to the "Rights of Man," had indulged in a few extra glasses on the acquittal of the *soi-disant* patriots, Hardy, Horne Tooke, &c. On returning home, and getting into bed, he took the *precaution* to put the candle under the bed. He soon became sensible of the inconvenience of such a practice. Starting up with the heavy insensibility of an intoxicated man he stumbled against the window, and making a dash at it, fell into the court behind. Luckily he carried part of the window frame with him, which, meeting with obstructions, broke his fall, so that, although he descended a considerable distance, and was much bruised, no bone was broken. That this gentleman was deeply implicated in the

dangerous proceedings of the day there is little doubt. During his confinement from illness, he received innumerable communications by letter, which he would not entrust to others; but, tore them open with his teeth, his hands being much bruised. In later years, he made a large fortune, by editing an evening newspaper, and advocating, with ability, ultra tory principles. No lives were lost by this mishap, though Munden's house also caught fire. The narrator of the tale, then an infant, was carried through the flames by his affectionate mother.

Munden then removed to a small cottage at Kentish Town; not a "cottage of gentility"; for it had no apartments under ground. A little vault beneath the dining room served for a cellar; and the master of the house, when he had guests, was obliged to raise the carpet, and descend a step ladder, to fetch up a fresh bottle. Yet here Moore sang, and Morland painted. The cottage looked on the fields, and that strange mortal, George Morland, was accustomed to sit there for hours with the favourite gin-bottle before him, and sketch cattle from the life. Many of the best of these productions Munden purchased.*

* Though not, like his friend Bannister, possessing a professional knowledge of painting, he had a fine perception of the art. He got together a valuable collection of drawings by Turner, in his earlier and best style, Girtin, Cousins, Cipriani

Our actor afterwards removed to a larger house, where a circumstance occurred which is worth recording, He had a party of friends dining there, who remained late. In the middle of the night, or, rather, early in the morning, the house was broken open by thieves. The family were not disturbed; but the thieves, setting one of the party to listen on the stairs, examined the larder, and finding abundant remnants of good feeding, brought them up to the dining-room. Without troubling themselves with the formality of a table-cloth, or knives and forks, they proceeded to demolish the provender by the primitive process of tearing it to pieces with their fingers. The marks on the table, where each had deposited his pinches of salt, determined the number:—there were six. They opened the cellaret, and regaled themselves with a bottle of wine and a bottle of porter. Their booty, however, was slight. A ring, taken off and accidentally left by Mrs. Munden, whilst superintending the domestic arrangements, formed nearly the whole. They had emptied a trunk, containing

---

and Bartolozzi. Two companion drawings, on a large scale, which he possessed,—Wells Cathedral, by Turner, and Durham Castle by Girtin,—were works of extraordinary merit. Girtin sent him over from Paris, by Holcroft, one of the last of his productions. An intimacy with the artists, and a ready admittance to their studios, enabled him to obtain these drawings at moderate prices.

theatrical clothes, to the last coat, when they were alarmed by the early rising of one of the maid servants. These clothes were valuable, as they were covered with a great deal of gold and silver lace. Munden always provided his own costume,* wearing nothing that belonged to the theatre, and gave large sums for any dress that suited his fancy. Among the suits which formed his wardrobe was a black velvet coat, &c., which had belonged to George II., of the richest Genoa velvet; and another, made for Francis Duke of Bedford, at Paris, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' marriage, which is said to have cost 1000*l.* The coat had originally been fringed with precious stones, of which the sockets only remained when it came into the hands of the "*fripier;*" but in its dilapidated state Munden gave 40*l.* for it. His wigs, also, for old men, were of great antiquity and value; they were always in the care of, and daily inspected by a hairdresser, attached to the theatre. On the morning after the burglary, the injured party applied to his friends, the sitting magistrates at Bow-street, Sir Wm. Parsons, and Mr. Justice Bond, for advice. They asked what he had lost, and learning the

* To his attention to costume our actor owed much of his fame. Fuseli, the painter, broke into a burst of admiration when he saw him dressed for one of the Witches in "Macbeth."

trifling amount, said, "Munden, you must not tell any one we gave you this advice, but to prosecute will cause you a great deal of trouble and unpleasantness, and you had better put up with the loss." One of the magistrates whispered to an officer, and inquired, "who was on the North-road last night?" "Little Jemmy, with a party, your worship." "Have you ascertained, Munden," rejoined Sir William Parsons, "how the robbers gained an entrance?" "By forcing up the parlour window." "Was there an impression of a very small foot on the mould beneath?" "Yes." "Enough! Should you like to see the leader of the gang that robbed your house?" "I have rather a fancy for it," said the astonished comedian. "Then go over to the Brown Bear, opposite, at one o'clock to-morrow afternoon; enter the room on the right, and you will see Townshend, the officer, seated at the head of a table, with a large company. You may be assured that all the rest are thieves. If he asks you to sit down, do so; and the man who sits upon your right hand will be the person who planned and conducted the robbery of your house." With the glee consequent upon a relish for humorous situations, the actor promised compliance. He attended at the appointed time; knocked at the door—was told to enter, and a group of gaol-birds met his eye, headed by Townshend,

who was diligently engaged in carving a round of beef. "Mr. Townshend," said the aggrieved child of Thespis, "I wanted to have spoken to you, but I see you are engaged." "Not at all, Mr. Munden; I shall be at your service in a few minutes; but, perhaps, you will take a snack with us. Jemmy, make way for Mr. Munden." Jemmy, with a wry face, did as he was bid. The actor sat down; turned towards his uneasy neighbour, and examined his features minutely. The company believing that Jemmy was undergoing the process of identification, laughed immoderately. It happened that a round of beef, with the remnant of a haunch of venison, had formed the repast with which Munden's uninvited guests had regaled themselves. The thieves, who were well aware of the burglary, and knew the person of the victim, indulged themselves in ex-tempore and appropriate jokes. "Jemmy, your appetite is failing," said one; "have a little more. You were always fond of boiled beef." Curiosity satisfied, the actor withdrew, greatly to the relief of Mr. Jemmy, to whom he made a low bow at parting. This hero afterwards suffered the last penalty of the law for some offence of greater magnitude. These were the customs that prevailed half a century ago. The officer had the thieves under his immediate eye, and

seldom gave them much trouble until they were worth forty pounds; that is, candidates for the gibbet and the halter. If much stir was made after a *lost* gold watch, and a handsome reward offered, a hint from the man in office recovered it; and when the final period of retributive justice arrived, this functionary fearlessly entered a room crowded with malefactors, and, beckoning with his finger, was followed by his man, who well knew "he was wanted." The Brown Bear was as safe a place of retreat for the thief as any other. It is even said, that a famous highwayman ensconced himself for some time very snugly in lodgings near it, knowing that search would be made after him in every other direction; as young Watson did in Newgate-street, when every wall was placarded with a large reward for his apprehension.

Munden was fond of attending the Police Courts in Bow-street, during the intervals of rehearsal, to witness the comedy of real life. On one occasion, sitting by the side of Sir Richard Birnie, with whom he was very intimate, Dick Martin, the eccentric, but humane member for Galway, came to prefer one of his usual charges of cruelty to animals. After the charge was disposed of, Sir Richard whispered in Martin's ear: "The gentleman who sits beside me is Munden, the comedian."

The bailiff whom Mr. Martin's tenants plunged into the bogs of Cunnemara and forced to swallow the writ of which he was the bearer, could not have looked more astonished than did Dick at this announcement. "Is he by G—d?" he retorted. "Mr. Martin," gravely added the magistrate, "It is my duty to fine you for that oath." "With all my heart!" said Dick; and, bowing to Mr. Munden, cheerfully paid the fine.

The Fire King pursued the comedian to his calm retreat. A lady, who was stopping on a visit, sent her maid to search for some articles of female finery in her bed-room, to be exhibited to the wondering gaze of the other visitors. The careful servant, fearful that a spark might drop into the drawers, held the candle behind her, and ignited the bed-curtains. She then ran, screaming, below to her mistress, leaving the door and windows open. In a moment the room was in a blaze, and the flames flashed out on the staircase. Again did the fond mother preserve her infant son, (who was sleeping in his crib in the next room) regardless of the scorching heat through which she bore him. The now flourishing village of Kentish Town was then little more than a hamlet, and contained no fire-engine. The house would have been burnt down, but for the exertions of the volunteers, who assembled on the occasion, and, forming themselves

in line, performed the peaceable duty of passing buckets of water to each other from a neighbouring pond, until they reached the soldier exposed to the heat of the fire, who discharged their contents on the foe. These volunteers were commanded by a Captain Fraser.* They arranged themselves in loyal array, and saluted their Sovereign (George III.), as he passed through the village to visit Lord Mansfield at Caen Wood. The King stopped the carriage, and, inquiring the name of the commander, sent for him, and shook him cordially by the hand. The scene was affecting, for Captain Fraser was the grandson of Lord Lovatt, who had been in arms against the House of Hanover, and was beheaded for high treason, on Tower Hill, in 1747.

Resuming stage affairs;—on the 15th Sept., 1794, was represented a new prelude, called

* This gentleman was once riding in the stage-coach from Kentish Town to London, in company with a lady, a recent resident in the village, and Mrs. Munden. The lady began to launch out in most extravagant praise of Munden's person and manners. When she had concluded, Captain Fraser quietly said, "Allow me to introduce you, madam, to Mrs. Munden." The actor himself fell into a similar mistake during the performances of the Young Roscius. Seeing a friend behind the scenes who took a warm interest in Master Betty, he accosted him thus: "I like your protegé much, but I wonder you had his portrait painted by ——" His friend stopped him by saying, "Mr. Munden, let me have the pleasure of making you acquainted with Mr. Opie."

"The Rival Queens, or Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden," attributed to Holcroft. Principal performers: Lewis, Johnstone, Munden, Harley, and Mrs. Fawcett. 19th, "Beaux Stratagem"—Scrub, Munden. 24th, Hardcastle, in "She Stoops to Conquer;" Mrs. Hardcastle, Mrs. Davenport (being her first appearance on any stage). Oct. 23 (first time), "The Rage," by Reynolds—Flush, Munden; and Dorcas, in "Cimon." 30th, Piccaroon, in a new opera called "Arrived at Portsmouth." Nov. 30, "Midas." 29th, Cimberton, in "The Conscious Lovers." Dec. 6 (first time), "The Town Before You," by Mrs. Cowley—Humphrey, Munden. Jan. 29, 1795, Tally-ho, in "Fontainbleau." 31, Valoury, in "Mysteries of the Castle." March 19 (first time), "Life's Vagaries," by O'Keefe—Sir Hans Burgess, Munden. April 23 (first time), "Irish Mimic," by O'Keefe—Cypress, Munden. May 1, in "The Sailor's Prize" (first time), for Johnston's benefit. 2d, Donald, in a new play, called "The Deserted Daughter," by Holcroft. 6th, Pounce, in "British Heroism" (first time), for Mrs. Martyr's benefit. 8th, Munden's benefit, "Love Makes a Man," Don Lewis, Munden; with, "Who's the Dupe?" Gradus, Fawcett; Doiley, Munden. 14th, Fool, in "The Battle of Hexham," for Fawcett's benefit. 29th, Bernard's benefit, Don Cæsar, in "A Bold Stroke

for a Husband." June 2, Drugget, in "Three Weeks after Marriage." 6th, Thomas, in "The Irish Widow," for Mrs. Clendining's benefit. 8th, Brandon's benefit, Lord Scratch, in "The Dramatist;" and Little John, in "Robin Hood." 12th, Grumio, in "Catherine and Petruchio." 13th, Ralph, in "The Maid of the Mill." 16th, Sir Walter Waring, in "The Woodman." Sept. 23 (new season), Spado, in "The Castle of Andalusia." 25th, Governor Harcourt, in "The Chapter of Accidents;" on which occasion Mr. Knight made his first appearance. Oct. 5, General, in "The Midnight Hour." 22nd, Shelty, in "The Highland Reel." 30th, Sir Anthony Absolute, in "The Rivals." Nov. 5, Tokay, in "Wives Revenged." 7th (first time), "Speculation," by Reynolds—Project, Munden. Dec. 9, "Henry IV." (first part), Falstaff, Fawcett; Carriers, Quick and Munden. 22d, Autolycus, in "The Winter's Tale." Jan. 23, 1796, Morton produced his comedy, "The Way to Get Married," with the following cast:—Tangent, Lewis; Toby Allspice, Quick; Dick Dashall, Fawcett; Captain Faulkner, Pope; M'Query, Johnstone; Caustic, Munden. This was a successful part of Munden's, and he played it always with much applause. Feb. 2 (first time), "Lock and Key," by Prince Hoare—Brummagem, Munden. In this character he is painted by Clint. Feb. 23, was play-

ed "The Doldrum." This out-herod's all O'Keefe's extravaganzas. To persuade a man that he has slept seven years, and the audience to imagine he believes it, is to draw largely on human credulity. Munden played Sir Marmaduke, and Quick, Septimus.

On 12th March, was represented at Drury-Lane (for the first time), "The Iron Chest," by Geo. Colman, jun., taken from the novel of "Caleb Williams," by Godwin. This piece is too well known to require description, and it is only mentioned here for the purpose of recording a circumstance that afterwards occurred. At its first representation it was hissed furiously. This reception by the audience Colman attributed to the bad acting of Mr. Kemble, and published his play, with a preface, reflecting on that gentleman in a tone of the bitterest acrimony. Amongst other faults, he accused him of exaggeration, declaring that, "if sewed up in a skin to play a hog, in a pantomime, he would rather play a hog with six legs than a hog with four."

In the course of the following vacation, Munden was engaged at the Dublin Theatre, by Daly, in conjunction with Mr. Kemble. Munden, sitting in the green-room, took a London newspaper out of his pocket, and had just commenced reading it, when his brother performer intimated that he should like to see it by and by. Munden politely relinquished

it. Kemble perused it attentively, and returned it without an observation, resuming the conversation in the tone of calm indifference which he usually displayed. When he left the room, Munden was shocked to find that the paper contained the whole of Colman's virulent and personal attack. His first impulse was to call on Kemble, and explain that his readiness in handing over the newspaper did not, as might possibly be inferred, arise from a malevolent motive; but, on reflection, he considered that such an explanation would be indelicate and uncalled for. Mr. Kemble preserved a dignified silence on the subject of "The Iron Chest" and its author; and Colman, when he cooled a little, feeling the impropriety of such gross personalities, did all in his power to withdraw the preface from circulation. This preface became so scarce, that during the O. P. Row, some malignant fellow offered a guinea for it by public advertisement, for the purpose of annoying Mr. Kemble. The actor and the author afterwards became reconciled, and frequently drank potations deep together, as was "their custom in the afternoon."

Cooke, whose orgies were exposed to public view, was secretly stung at his rival's astuteness, who drank nearly as much alcohol in wine as *he* did in spirits, but drank in private, preserving a decent demeanour. We-

witzer, the comedian, who could not afford wine, was once observed by his manager coming out of a public house at night much the worse for liquor, with—porter. The manager was in a similar state with port wine; but, retaining his presence of mind, raised his hands with feigned astonishment, and exclaimed, "Wewitzer, this will never do!" Sir Walter Scott avers that he never was so nearly "fuddled," as in dining at his own house alone with this fascinating gentleman. The poet and the tragedian talked upon subjects with which they were both familiar,—antiquarian lore and the early English drama; and as Kemble uttered each sentence, he gravely filled and emptied his glass, until fresh supplies became necessary. Mr. Kemble and Mr. Munden, with the exception of one difference of slight duration, continued firm friends to the last. The tragedian visited the comedian during his fits of the gout.* It was at the residence of the latter, at Kentish Town, that Mr. Kemble, leaving Mrs. Kemble, who was not known to the family, in the carriage at the door, during one of his fits of absence

* Another of his visitors on these occasions was Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Garrow, wife of the eminent judge, who had preserved a friendship for him ever since he was a boy at the law stationer's, and was in the habit of taking briefs to her husband, then an Old Bailey counsel. It is said she had been attracted by his good looks.

remained longer than he had proposed. The day was a severe one, with a considerable fall of snow. Mrs. Kemble, feeling chilled, sent the footman to her husband, to whom he delivered the following message: "Sir, Missus wishes to know if you shall be much longer, as she is afraid of catching the rheumatiz." "Friend," replied Kemble, with his ordinary precision, "go back to your mistress, and tell her I am coming; and the next time you deliver that message, be pleased to say—rheumatism." In fact, both actors were serviceable to each other. The Sir Giles Overreach of Kemble was greatly supported by the Marrall of Munden; and in Hamlet, and many other plays, they contributed mutual aid. When this great tragedian was going through the range of his characters previous to his retirement from the stage, he had a strong desire to play Falstaff. He was twice advertized for it, and was with difficulty persuaded by his friends to abandon the intention. On this occasion he sent to Munden, who then resided near him, in the vicinity of Russell-square, and begged his friend to read the part to him.

Here it may be observed, that Munden was frequently pressed to play Falstaff. Assuredly, he would have greatly excelled in it. The public were not satisfied with any of the successors of Henderson in the part: those who had power, and justness of conception, lacked

humour; the latter quality, the subject of our memoir eminently possessed, and the very excess of it, which was so frequently decried, could scarcely have been deemed a fault in such a character as Falstaff. His flexible and strongly marked countenance, and powerful voice,* would have been of great advantage to him. But Munden looked at the result. If successful, he knew he should be called upon to play it repeatedly; and he feared that the "stuffing," as it is called—the additional clothing to make up the bulk of the person, might subject him to cold and more frequent attacks of gout, to which he was greatly subject: if unsuccessful, it would detract from his merited reputation. He entertained at times a notion of playing Shylock; his success in that part is more problematical. He would, without doubt, have played it with propriety, as Mr. Dowton did when he once performed it.

This year, 1796, beheld the first appearance of that great comedian, Dowton, on the London boards, which were enriched by the addition of Elliston and Murray to the existing stock of sterling actors. Nov. 2, their Majes-

* The late Dr. Babington said, that when the Drury Lane company were playing at the Opera House, not being able to procure any other seat, he went to the gallery, and the only performer he could hear through the piece was Munden, in consequence of his distinct enunciation.

ties commanded, at Covent Garden Theatre, "The Way to Get Married," and, "Lock and Key." Dec. —, Munden played with Quick and Knight in "Abroad and at Home," a production reflecting high credit on Mr. Holman's talents. This was followed by a "Cure for the Heart Ache," the best of Morton's comedies, in which our subject played Old Rapid, to Lewis's Young Rapid. Old Rapid was one of his richest performances. In later days, Elliston played Young Rapid to him with great applause, but in so sententious a manner, that his dramatic father once whispered in his ear: "Bob, this is Young Turgid, not Young Rapid."

On the 15th March, 1797, died Mrs. Pope, the Miss Young, of Garrick. She was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey,—not far from Barry, and Mrs. Clive, her early theatrical friends,—and followed to the grave by the principal performers of both theatres, who respected her private worth as much as they admired her extraordinary talents. This sad event was followed by another death to the stage, though not to the world: the retirement of Miss Farren, the great rival of Mrs. Jordan, and in some parts her superior. This lady, whose manners and dress had long been imitated in the circles of fashion, became shortly afterwards one of its brightest ornaments. She took leave in Lady Teazle, her

best part. By the Earl of Derby, to whom she gave her hand on quitting the stage, she had one daughter, the present Countess of Wilton. On the first of May, Mrs. Siddons played in comedy for her own benefit, and took occasion, in an address, to pay a handsome compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. Pope. Munden played for his benefit in "Every one has his Fault," and at the close of the season, was engaged by Mr. Colman at the Haymarket Theatre.

## CHAPTER III.

Our actor at the Haymarket—Colman's "Heir at Law"—Anecdote of John Palmer—Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Abington at Covent-Garden—Retirement of Quick: his great excellence—Mrs. Crawford quits the stage—Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Crawford in Lady Randolph—Return of Mr. Smith—Munden in Verdun and Bonus—"The Birth-day"—Munden's Captain Bertram and Crack—"Speed the Plough"—The "rebellious eight:" Lord Salisbury's arbitration—First appearance of George Frederick Cooke at Covent-Garden: his surprising success—Cooke and Macklin's Shylock—Macklin's character—Cooke's treatment of his former manager—"The Poor Gentleman"—Anecdotes of Mrs. Mattocks, Mrs. Webb, Aikin, and Incledon—Munden and Incledon at Dublin—Cooke and the Edinburgh critic—Kemble and Talma—Colman's "John Bull"—Munden and Johnstone in Dublin during the rebellion—Tom Hill—Cooke's vagaries.

Our Actor made his first appearance at the Haymarket Theatre on the 20th June 1797, in Tony Lumpkin;—Hardcastle, by Mr. Suett. July 15, Mr. Colman produced one of the best of his comedies, "The Heir at Law," which was thus strongly supported. Dr. Pangloss, Fawcett; Daniel Dowlas, alias Lord Duberly, Suett; Dick Dowlas, Palmer; Zekiel Homespun, Munden; Henry Moreland, Charles Kemble; Steadfast, J. Aikin; Kenrick, John-

stone; Cecily Homespun, Mrs. Gibbs; Deborah Dowlas, alias Lady Duberly, Mrs. Davenport; Caroline Dormer, Miss De Camp. Zekiel Homespun must have been out of Munden's line. Fawcett was very successful in Dr. Pangloss, which was, indeed, one of his best parts; but the audience did not at first enter into the humour of the quotations, and it was not until after a gentle hint in the newspapers, that they laughed at what they were supposed to understand. Lord and Lady Duberly are humorously conceived, and told capitally; but Colman is sadly unfortunate in his sentimental parts, which are very mawkish. How he could fancy that in such hybrid productions as the Iron Chest, and the Mountaineers, he was imitating Shakespeare, argues a self-conceit not easily to be paralleled. Munden took for his benefit, on the 8th August, the Young Quaker, in which he played Clod; Dinah, by Miss De Camp; to which followed a Comic tale called Benjamin Bolus, or the Newcastle Apothecary, recited by Munden, and the farce of a Beggar on Horseback; Corney, Munden; Codger, Suett. In the summer of this year, the awfully sudden death of John Palmer, the circumstances of which are too well known to be recapitulated, took place during the performance of the Stranger, on the Liverpool Stage. The subject of this memoir always stated that

John Palmer was the best general actor he had ever seen. Palmer played everything, and everything equally well. He possessed the advantages of a tall and well-proportioned figure, an expressive countenance, melodious voice, and most persuasive manner. Mrs. Siddons once observed that, so naturally insinuating was he in Stukely, she felt at times off her guard, and, for a moment, could hardly help fancying that his propositions were real. He carried this quality with him into private life, which obtained for him the name of "plausible Jack." It is said that on one occasion, having an invitation to dinner, he knocked by mistake at the next door, where he found a large party assembled in the drawing room. Not perceiving his host and hostess, he concluded they were in some other part of the dwelling, and commenced conversing familiarly with the company. The master and mistress of the house plainly perceived there was a mistake, but were so fascinated by his powers of conversation that they suffered him to proceed until dinner was announced, when they pressed him earnestly to let it be no mistake, but to remain and be their guest. Jack Palmer was improvident and always in difficulties; he however contrived to keep the bailiffs in good humour by orders for the theatre.

The season of 1797-8, beheld those surpass-

ing actresses Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Abington at Covent Garden. March 31, 1798, Munden played Sir Peter Teazle to Mrs. Abington's Lady Teazle. April 23, Peachum, for Madam Mara's benefit. 24th, The new pieces that were produced, were Mortons' "Secrets Worth Knowing," and Colman's "Blue Devils;" and on the 30th, "The Eccentric Lover," a new Comedy by Cumberland: principal characters by Lewis, Quick, Holman, Fawcett, Murray, Knight, Whitfield, Munden, Mrs. Mattocks and Miss Betterton (now Mrs. Glover). Mr. Quick was taken ill at this period, and was desirous of playing only occasionally. Mr. Harris objecting to this arrangement, he did not engage for the season 1798-9. He performed for some time in the country, and played Isaac, in the Duenna, at Drury Lane, in 1801, and for several benefits, after he had formally retired from the stage. His last appearance was for Mrs. Mattocks' benefit in 1813. By Quick's retirement, Munden succeded to a vast accession of characters.

Quick must have been a rich comic actor. The least glance at the portraits of him in Spado and Tony Lumpkin will convince any one of his extraordinary humour. In the latter painting, by De Wilde, he is represented reading the letter, and the look of puzzlement with which he tries to find out whether it is "an x or an izzard" is true to the life. That

admirable comedian Mr. Liston was wont to provoke roars of laughter in this character ; but Quick's squat figure was of much service to him in such parts as this, and in testy old men. He was a great favourite with King George the Third, who delighted in comic performances. When Quick played nine nights at Windsor in 1796, his Majesty commanded six of them. The monarch, at a later period, took an equal fancy for Joe Grimaldi, the clown ; and laughed almost to suffocation at his mimic exhibition of swallowing a quantity of long puddings. Mr. Quick retired with what he considered a handsome fortune, but it is feared that the increased value of every article of life, consequent upon the war, rendered his calculations incomplete. The retired actor took up his abode at Islington, and was accustomed to smoke a pipe in the evening, with a select few at a tavern in his vicinity. There, some years afterwards, Munden and the late Mr. Macready sought him out, and hid themselves in the corner of the coffee room. After observing him awhile, the incognito was broken by Munden imitating his voice and manner, in some direction to the waiter, with such exactness, that Quick started up in amazement, but perceiving at once the stage joke, walked up to them, and shook hands very cordially. Quick died one year before his rival and successor, leaving a son and

daughter. Miss Quick married Mr. Davenport, a gentleman of learning and ability, with whom the writer has had the pleasure of being on terms of friendship for many years. He is the author of some valuable works on education.

Mrs. Crawford also quitted the stage in this year. This lady disputed the palm with Mrs. Siddons:—in such parts as Monimia, she probably surpassed her. Lady Randolph was the character in which each struggled for pre-eminence. Munden witnessed the performance of Lady Randolph by Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Siddons from the pit on successive nights, being desirous of forming an estimate of their respective merits. He was lost in admiration of Mrs. Crawford's powers; but when, on the second night, he prepared to dress for the farce, after Mrs. Siddons' performance, his feelings were so powerfully affected that he was incapable of rousing himself to comic effort without a stimulant.

The same season which witnessed the retirement of Mr. Quick, and Mrs. Crawford, beheld the return of another contemporary of Garrick, after ten years absence,—Mr. Smith, the original Charles Surface, who played that character for one night—for the benefit of his friend King. Though nearly seventy, he played with an animation and spirit which justified his earlier renown.

June 2, Our actor was, inconsiderately, per-

suaded to play Dromio of Syracuse to the Dromio of Ephesus of a Mr. Rees, with permission to that gentleman to imitate his voice and manner; but the imitation was not successful. Indeed, it would have been difficult for any one to carry it on through a whole play. Mr. Rees, who was really a good mimic, in some dispute with old Astley, convulsed the court with laughter, by delivering his testimony in the odd tone of that eccentric manager, who had preceded him in the examination, and had caused much merriment by stating that he was proprietor of the Circus, near the "obstacle" (obelisk).

In the summer of 1798, Munden was again at the Haymarket. On the opening of Covent Garden he continued his usual routine of parts. Sept. 21, Emery, from York, made his first appearance, in Frank Oatlands. Oct. 11, "Lover's Vows," adapted from the German, by Mrs. Inchbald, was acted,—Munden played Verdun. Dec. 8, Another new part—Bonus, in Reynold's comedy of "Laugh when you can." April 8, 1799, was produced,—also from the German, "The Birth-Day," in three acts. This was put together by T. Dibdin, from a rude version of the original, which had been in the hands of Mrs. Inchbald, who could make nothing of it. The incidents, though simple, are highly affecting, and as the piece has seldom been per-

formed of late years, are here described :— Captain Bertram and his brother Mr. Bertram have a violent family quarrel, in consequence of a law-suit which has lasted fifteen years, about a small garden. The difference is greatly fomented by an intriguing housekeeper, to serve her selfish ends. Jack Junk, an honest tar, contrives that Emma, Mr. Bertram's daughter, shall be introduced into her uncle's presence to congratulate him on his birth-day ; her interesting and artless demeanour, and pathetic representations win upon the old man, and effect a reconciliation between the two brothers: the treacherous housekeeper is immediately dismissed, and all are made happy. Fawcett was excellent in Jack Junk, and Munden always considered that Captain Bertram was his chef d'œuvre in sentimental comedy; so unique was his performance, that few have attempted the part since. Indeed the piece may be said to have disappeared with him.

In the summer of 1799, he visited his early friends at Lancaster, and played with Quick at Birmingham.

The new pieces at Covent-Garden, next season, were "Novelty," a comedy, by Reynolds:—Lewis, Pope, Fawcett, Farley, Munden, Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Pope; and in November, "The Turnpike Gate," a musical farce, by Knight, the actor, which gave Mun-

den another comical part (Crack), in O'Keefe's extravagant style, which, in spite of criticism he made the most of, and the public liked it. Nov. 30, He played Ava Thoanoa, in the "Wise Men of the East," a comedy in five acts, transmitted by Kotzebue to Mr. Harris, for representation in this country, and adapted to the stage by Mrs. Inchbald. It is, upon the whole, an indifferent production. Jan. 16, 1800, he played in an unsuccessful piece by Cumberland, entitled "Joanna," Feb. 8th, 1800, was performed "Speed the Plough," by Morton, which added another laurel to that author's brow. It was finely acted by Pope, Fawcett, H. Johnston, Murray, Munden, Mrs. H. Johnston, Miss Murray, Mrs. Davenport, Mr. Knight. The latter gentleman, the predecessor of the very clever little actor of the same name, who performed in a similar line some years afterwards, played Farmer Ashfield in a most masterly style. In March, commenced the dispute between the principal actors of Covent-Garden Theatre and Mr. Harris, the chief proprietor, in consequence of certain edicts which that theatrical monarch promulgated affecting their interests. An appeal was made to the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Salisbury), who declined to interfere in such dispute in his official capacity, but ultimately consented to become arbitrator. A newspaper controversy ensued, in which the

actors manfully defended themselves against anonymous attacks, in letters to which were appended the signatures of John Johnstone, G. Holman, Alexander Pope, Charles Incledon, Joseph S. Munden, John Fawcett, Thomas Knight, and Henry E. Johnston; but the letters are supposed to have been written by Mr. Holman, as the pamphlet afterwards published certainly was. The main ground of their complaint is the theatrical monopoly, and the effect of it is thus forcibly denounced: —"The meanest individual of the persons described (artisans), when dismissed from an employment, or even when displeased with his employer, may, if he possess honour and industry, soon secure to himself a situation as eligible as his former. No such resource is open to the actor; he must submit to every species of oppression with which his employer may choose to load him, or what is the alternative? A suspension of the exercise of his profession, to which he has devoted his time and talents, and by which alone he can, consequently, support himself and family." "The rebellious eight," as they were styled, were entertained at dinner, at the Garrick's Head, in Bow-street, by the actors of Drury-lane, Bannister, jun., C. Kemble, Kelly, Barrymore, Dowton, &c. &c. They also received letters from the retired comedians, Moody and King (the last styling himself the Father of the

Stage), approving of their proceedings. Lord Salisbury delivered, in writing, dated third May, his decision in the matter of the arbitration, deciding against the actors on every point. The particular grievances are hardly worth detailing at this distance of time, but the augmentation of the charge on benefit nights, from 140*l.* to 160*l.*, and increase of the fine on what was called the "sick clause,"* appears to be harsh and sudden. The actors complained, as might have been expected, that the Lord Chamberlain was partial, and hinted in private that the King's influence had been exerted against them. His Majesty was rather fond of interfering in matters that were not strictly political; but the insinuation that with the leaven of the American war still fermenting in his bosom, he was offended at the terms "glorious rebellious eight" (a foolish invention of Moody's), seems scarcely credible. Lord Salisbury recommended "to all parties an oblivion of what has passed in the course of their disputes." Whether the

* Extract from a letter from Mr. Smith to the Editor of 'The Morning Mirror,' dated Bury, Oct. 1798:—

"I believe the particular article of stoppage of salary in case of sickness, was first introduced to check occasional indisposition from caprice. I never had an article of that sort with Mr Garrick or any other manager in my life. It was once proposed to me, under the management of Mr. Beard, but I refused, and never would sign it, thinking it a very oppressive one."

actors were oblivious or not, they had no alternative but to submit. Mr. Harris certainly was not; for he set his mark on all of them, especially on Holman and Munden, whom he looked upon as the ringleaders, and he got rid of every one of them, at intervals, (Holman very soon,—it was not quite so convenient to part with Munden) as he could spare them, with the exception of Fawcett. As he had opposed Munden to Quick, so he brought forward Fawcett in opposition to Munden. This was easily effected by a disposition of parts, and there were not wanting underlings who would get an ill-natured paragraph inserted in the newspapers to "crush those singing birds," as another manager used to term the popular actors. It ought here to be mentioned in fairness, that Mr. Harris had, without solicitation, considerably increased Munden's salary, so soon as he perceived his merit, and the service he rendered to the theatre.

An affecting spectacle was witnessed this season. Poor O'Keefe, old and blind, was led on the stage by Mr. Lewis, to deliver a farewell address on the occasion of his benefit, which poverty forced him to require, and which was generously accorded by the manager. With equal generosity Mr. Quick and Mrs. Jordan volunteered their services, and the performers presented the old invalided dramatist with their salary for the night.

Notwithstanding the extravagance of O'-Keefe's general conceptions, there are traces of nature and simplicity in many of his pieces. In "Wild Oats," the best of them, who can forget the effect which Mr. Knight (*little* Knight) produced in making out an inventory of the furniture about to be seized, and in the proffer to "Have an apple?" Besides, which is much higher praise, his sentiments are always generous and benevolent, and his object —moral! As a farce writer, when confined within the bounds of probability, he had few equals. His situations are well contrived, and the humour of the equivoque irresistible: witness some scenes in "A Beggar on Horseback." It seemed necessary to say something of him here, as he wrote many parts expressly for Munden, but his memoirs, written by himself, contain the best record of his career. In his declining years, his chief amusement was to have Scott's novels, which he greatly admired, read to him. It is painful to learn that the person who performed this kind office, inconsiderately read this passage: "From Shakespeare to O'Keefe." "What is that?" said O'Keefe. "Oh! I comprehend: from the top to the bottom of the ladder. He might have placed me a few steps higher." For a moment or two he was visibly affected. The generous spirit of good Sir Walter would have scorned to inflict intentional pain on the poor blind old man.

During the recess, Munden visited Dublin with Bannister. They met with great success, their benefits being very productive. Thence they went to Birmingham, for one night only; Bannister playing Dr. Pangloss and Silvester Daggerwood, and his companion Zekiel Homespun and Nipperkin. Munden afterwards travelled to Chester, where, before his old admirers, he sang several comic songs, gratuitously, for the benefit of the veteran, Lee Lewis. His next engagement was at Liverpool, with Bannister, where "Speed the Plough" brought crowded houses. Their benefits were good: Bannister had 194*l.* and Munden 198*l.*

The autumn of this year found Mr. Kemble manager of Drury-Lane Theatre. Covent-Garden opened with "Speed the Plough" and "Hertford Bridge." Nov. 1, was produced Reynolds's comedy of "Life," sustained by the whole strength of the company. Munden was Paul Primitive. At this period, George Frederick Cooke made his first appearance on the London boards, at Covent-Garden, and met with unbounded applause. We have mentioned the name of this actor more than once before, perhaps irregularly, in these pages; but, great as his fame was in the provinces, and great as were the expectations consequently entertained of him by a London audience, the anticipation seems to have fallen far below the reality.

The following is a cotemporary criticism from "The Monthly Mirror" (vol. 10), a publication of considerable merit, which has been freely used in the compilation of this volume. Speaking of his Richard III., the writer observes—

"Arduous as a character thus versatile must be, it is yet one of the most favourable parts which an able actor can possibly select for his appearance. Such a man is Cooke—who seems to possess an active and capacious intellect, with a profound knowledge of the science of acting. He has read and thought for himself. He appears to have borrowed neither from contemporary nor deceased excellence. He sometimes passes over what have been usually conceived to be great points in the character, and he exalts other passages into importance which former Richards have not thought significant enough for particular notice. His object seems to have been to form a grand, characteristic, and consistent whole: and that whole is the result of deep thinking, and well directed study, judiciously adapted to his individual powers of acting; for Mr. Cooke not only *thinks* originally, but looks, speaks, and walks unlike any other man we ever saw. 'He is himself alone:' he is, therefore, in some degree, a mannerist; but his settled habits are not injurious to the characters he has hitherto played, or is likely to play, at

Covent-Garden; and his talents are so uncommonly brilliant, that, though we cannot be altogether blind to his defects, they are forgotten almost as soon as noticed. Admiration supersedes objection; and such are the insinuating effects of his acting, that the peculiarities, which rather offend at first, grow more pleasing by degrees, and, before the close of the performance, have lost nearly all their weight in the scale of criticism." One would think this was sufficiently encomiastic, but the admiration of the spectators far transcended such narrow limits. The critics of the pit, shouting "Bravo!" until they were hoarse, called out to Mr. Kemble, who was placidly surveying the performance from a private box, and whom, until they had got a new idol, they had extolled above Henderson, "What do you think of that, Kemble?"

The favourite of the town and his former manager, Munden, met upon the most cordial terms; with what sincerity on the part of Mr. Cooke will be seen in the sequel.

Cooke played, also, Shylock, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, and Sir Archy Macsarcasm, with just and merited applause. The faculty which he possessed of, as it has been termed, "hitting hard"—*i. e.*, producing very forcible effects—told strongly in Shylock; and the keen sarcasm, and deep dissimulation, which formed the essence of his personal character,

greatly aided the personification of Sir Pertinax and Sir Archy; whilst his intuitive apprehension, and the facility which he had obtained of catching the Scotch dialect, from his long engagement at Newcastle, close to the Border, rendered his performance of both these characters as near perfection as possible. Macklin, it is said, surpassed him: he certainly has never since been equalled in these parts. Macklin possessed the natural temper of Shylock: he was a savage man. He killed Mr. Hallam, the father of Mrs. Mattocks, by thrusting a stick into his eye in a moment of ferocity. The clever miscellany, before alluded to, contains a brutal attack on Mr. Garrick, after his decease, extracted, as a literary curiosity, from Macklin's papers. In the same periodical, Mr. Smith warmly defended the memory of his departed friend from the imputation of parsimony, relating several instances of bounteous private charity within his own knowledge. He might have added the fact mentioned by Davies, that Garrick gave to the committee of the Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund a house in Drury-Lane—bought it back of them for the sum of 370*l.*, and finally bequeathed it to the fund in his will. He paid the expenses of their Act of Parliament out of his own pocket, and with the consent of Mr. Lacy bestowed on the fund the receipts at his last performance on the stage. Macklin's

attack is evidently dictated by personal envy. He could not leave Mr. Quick alone, although that gentleman had mainly contributed to the success of "Love à la Mode," by his clever (the cleverest) performance of Beau Mordecai. He published a letter to him, containing the following coarse remarks, but the context indubitably proves that they were dictated by the inherent malignity of the man, aggravated by Quick's superiority on the scene:—"When you first acted the part of Mordecai, in 'Love à la Mode,' you thought yourself so young in the profession of an actor, and so inexperienced, as to suffer yourself to be directed by the author, how to dress, look, deport, and speak that character, for your acting of which you had his thanks, his praise, and his interest to get you retained in Covent-Garden Theatre.

"But such is the nature of your improvement in your profession, in that part in particular, that you neither dress it, look it, speak it, nor deport it, as you were instructed, nor as you used to do; nay, you do not speak the words nor the meaning of the author. In short, friend Quick, you have made it quite a different character from what the author intended it, and from what it appeared when you first acted it, and for some years after.

* * * *

"You, Sir, seem to be so high in your pro-

fession as to act in what manner you please in a scene, without considering how your acting affects the person in the scene with you. That is no affair of mine, unless it interferes with me as a brother: in that case, I am as tenacious to be relieved, as you are to offend; and I think I am justified when I resolve that no actor shall indulge his consequence or his policy by preventing the good effects of a scene that I, by fair brotherly means, am endeavouring to produce. This prevention you have very often effected in 'Love à la Mode,' and likewise in the trifling scene that you have with me in 'The Merchant of Venice,' though often requested, civilly, to alter your conduct in it."

Macklin, who died at the advanced age of 102, played until nearly the completion of his century of years, when, his recollection failing him during the performance, he was compelled to retire. Stage tradition reports that he could not, latterly, from physical weakness, summon up the violence of passion necessary for Shylock, in the scene with Tubal, and, when on the point of rushing on the stage, he used to call out to the prompter, "Kick my shins; kick my shins!" thus real pain brought forth fictitious passion.

Mr. Cooke took his benefit in Jan. 1801, and performed the Stranger. His receipts were 500*l.*; and Mr. Harris was so pleased with

his new actor, that he made him a present of the charges of the night. When Munden's benefit was approaching, Cooke, with great appearance of earnestness, begged to know whether he could be of any service. Munden replied, "George, when you were with us, you used to recite 'Collins's Ode to the Passions' in a very effective manner; and, as you are so great a favourite here, I think it would prove an attraction." Cooke vowed that nothing could give him more satisfaction. The night came, but Cooke did not. The excuse was, sudden indisposition. On another occasion, Munden was induced by his entreaties and protestations that he sought for an opportunity to make up for his former neglect, to put him in the bill for his benefit in a new character, and took the pains to call upon him and ascertain that he was studying the character previous to the rehearsal. In order that there might be no allurement this time, Munden invited him to dinner, saw that he took only a moderate quantity of wine, and walked arm and arm with him to the theatre. At the door, Cooke shook his friend by the hand, and said, "I wish you a bumper, Joe! I am going up to dress." When the time arrived for the prologue to be spoken, Munden inquired, in all directions, "Where is Cooke?" "Mr. Cooke, Sir," said the door-keeper; "why he left the house the moment he parted from

you." To quarrel with such a man would have been absurd; and they, therefore, continued upon such terms as persons brought into constant intercourse must be. Fortunately Munden, having his misgivings, had taken the precaution to have the part understudied by a respectable actor, and the audience being, in a great part, composed of his own personal friends were easily appeased.

Feb. 1801, "The Poor Gentleman" was a novelty that met with great success. Ollapod peculiarly suited the acting of Fawcett, and was as effective as Dr. Pangloss. Sir Robert Bramble was one of Munden's best parts: he played it on his last appearance on the stage. The actors did so much for the author, that it is difficult to say who excelled. The Hon. Lucretia M'Tab will hardly ever again have such a representative as Mrs. Mattocks. That lady had great gentility of manner, which she had acquired by frequent intercourse with the nobility: she was even admitted into the presence of royalty, and much regarded by Queen Charlotte. This requisite was not shared by her successors, who did not equal her in natural humour; in the latter quality, Mrs. Davenport came the nearest. The habit of paying deference to superiors in private life had induced in Mrs. Mattocks a reserved manner, which bore somewhat the appearance of hauteur. This put it into the head of some one

of her waggish colleagues (I fear it was Munden) to play off the following trick during the rehearsal, when there was a large assemblage of performers in the green-room, as well as on the state. Perceiving a pot girl serving the scene shifters with beer, the wag whispered something in her ear, and pointed to the green-room, at the upper end of which sat Mrs. Mattocks in stately dignity. Her consternation may be better imagined than described, when she beheld a little slatternly girl approach, and tender something she had in her hand, exclaiming, in a shrill tone,—" a glass of gin and bitters for Mrs. Mattocks." A loud laugh from the company made her sensible of the joke, and she very good humouredly joined in the merriment.

The great butt of the actors was Mrs. Webb, a very fat woman, a contrast to Mrs. Mattocks, as she was as coarse and vulgar as the other was genteel. One sultry night, Mrs. Webb, sitting in the green room waiting to be called, had powdered her face profusely to allay the perspiration that flowed down her cheeks. This being observed, the call boy was bribed to wait till the last moment, when he rushed in and exclaimed, " Mrs. Webb, the stage waits for you." " My God !" said Mrs. Webb; and forgetting altogether her dishabille, hastened, as fast as her corpulency would allow her, to present herself before the

audience, who received her, in her mottled state, with shouts of laughter. Another time, standing by the side scenes, a string was fastened to her dress, which only allowed her to step in view of the audience, when her progress was suddenly arrested. J. Aikin was a very nervous man, and it was Munden's amusement, when Aikin was engaged in the serious business of the stage, to catch his eye with an expression of countenance seeming to signify that his dress was disarranged, or that some other mishap had occurred, which kept poor Aikin in an agony of suspense until the scene was over. But Incledon was their prolific subject. His perpetual boasts furnished an ample theme. One about the quality of his voice, which he said had been improved by swallowing, in mistake, a quantity of train oil, provoked the sarcasm of Charles Bannister, (alluding to his ungraceful walk) that he had better have "swallowed a dancing master." He was actually persuaded to suck something, on the assurance that it was good for the voice, and even John Kemble forgot his dignity and joined in the recommendation. One day, at rehearsal, he boasted that he had at at home such Madeira as could be found no where else; and, on some expression of doubt, despatched a messenger to his house with the key of the cellar, desiring Mrs. Incledon to send a bottle from such and such a bin. The

wine was brought and duly approved of; but Munden observing where Incledon deposited the key, picked his pocket, and told the messenger to return with Mr. Incledon's love to his wife, for a second bottle, directing that it should be deposited in his own dressing-room. When apprized that all was ready, he said, "Charles, your Madeira is very good, but I think I have some upstairs that will match it." Other actors, in the secret, were invited to be umpires, and declared *nem. con.* that Munden's was the best; an opinion in which the vocalist himself joined. Munden and Incledon, when at Plymouth, were invited to dine with the Port-Admiral. In the course of the evening Incledon was missing, and on search being made, was found below surrounded by a group of the common sailors, with whom he was drinking grog, and singing "The Storm," "The Bay of Biscay," "Black Eyed Susan," and a host of nautical songs to an enraptured, if not an enlightened, audience. This scene has been described by Mr. Westmacott in a weekly newspaper, in the words in which Munden used to relate it. March 28, 1801, Cooke played, with Lewis as Wellborn, and Munden as Marrall, the character of Sir Giles Overreach, for Mr. Lewis's benefit. He played with great discrimination and astonishing force. In the summer of 1801, Munden went to Dublin with

Incledon. They had very full houses on their benefit nights. Munden had nearly 500*l.* He received liberal offers to proceed to Cork and Limerick, but was prevented by a previous engagement at Birmingham.

Cooke was playing about the same time all his characters at Edinburgh. An Edinburgh critic takes a little of the gilt off the gingerbread of London applause in Richard III.:—

"I cannot unqualifiedly compliment the judgment of Mr. Cooke in his representation of this character. In the most unnatural courtship scene, with Lady Anne, when much more than "a tongue to wheedle with the devil" was necessary, to bury in oblivion the hardly cold embers of a murdered father-in-law, and a butchered husband, the same insulting, exulting, malignant expression overspread his countenance, as when paying his addresses to the widowed queen. Upon the whole, his Richard, though a forcible, was not a fine representation. It resembled the image of Nebuchadnezzar, described by the prophet Daniel,—much iron, much brass, much clay, some silver, and a little gold."

This is a just criticism. Those who beheld the late Mr. Kean in the scene with Lady Anne will easily comprehend the difference.

Little can be said of our comedian beyond the detail of his usual performances, until October, when he played Peter Post Obit (a Legacy-hunter) in a comedy by Reynolds, entitled "Folly as it Flies," and spoke a humorous epilogue. In the vacation he played at Liverpool with other "stars," and had the

largest benefit,—larger even than Mrs. Billington's.

February 9, 1802, A new opera, "The Cabinet," by T. Dibdin, was very successful: though moderately written, the excellence of the music, and the singing of Braham, Incledon, and Storace, carried it through triumphantly. Munden played Peter, a British seaman, and sang some claptrap songs, adapted to the times, with great applause. The author received from the theatre one of the largest sums ever paid for an opera, and Braham is reported to have sold his share in the music for four hundred guineas.

Mr. Kemble visited Paris in August 1802, and was treated with great distinction. The Actors of the "Comédie Française" received him with all the respect due to the "Le Kain of England," at a superb banquet, where Talma did the honors. The intimacy, thus commenced between these eminent actors, continued to the latest period. Talma was present at the dinner given to Mr. Kemble, at the Freemason's Tavern, on his retirement from the stage. To the writer, who sat next to him, he expressed the warm admiration he felt for the man, whom he termed the first of English tragedians.

To the same party he intimated a desire to play in English, at one of our national the-

atres, and was candidly advised not to attempt it, as, though he spoke the language intelligibly in conversation, his foreign accent was too apparent in recitation. In returning thanks for his health being proposed at the dinner in question, he commenced: "Although I cannot tank you vid my words, I do vid my heart:" and concluded by proposing: "prosperity to the English nation and the English stage." The first part of this toast rendered him a little unpopular with the republicans, of whom he was a disciple; and yet, strange to say, he was a Buonapartist. Though much courted by Louis the Eighteenth, he cherished the memory of Napoleon, with whom he had been intimately connected in early life; and in some part, wherein there were allusions that applied to the Emperor, he walked from one side of the stage to the other, with his hands behind him, in striking resemblance to the fallen hero. The audience hailed the personification with shouts of applause, and the play became so popular, that the police were obliged to interfere, and forbade the attitude; yet, notwithstanding the prohibition, he continued to walk across the stage, but with his hands crossed *before* him. Talma, still hankering to give the English public "a taste of his quality," played several scenes, each selected from one of his best parts, in conjunction with Mdlle. George, in the Concert

Room, at the Opera House. He was a very energetic actor, and managed, with great skill, to prevent the recurrence of French rhymes being sensible to the ear. Matthews gave an imitation of Talma which, though "outré," was a resemblance.

The next new production, worthy of notice at Covent Garden, was T. Dibdin's Opera of "Family Quarrels," in which Munden sang a comic song, commencing "Gaffer Grist, Gaffer's son, and his little jack-ass trotting along the road," which was very popular. March 5, 1803, Mr. Colman brought forward, at Covent-Garden, his Comedy of "John Bull," the copy-right of which he sold to Mr. Harris. It completely succeeded. Mr. Cooke had the advantage of an original part, Peregrine, which he played very finely. Equally great was Fawcett, in Job Thornberry. It has been supposed, erroneously, that the assignment of this part to Fawcett, instead of to himself, was the cause of Munden's subsequent retirement from Covent Garden. True it is that he refused the part of Sir Simon Rochdale, which was beneath the standard of his talents. Colman, who, like Morton, was a fine reader, threw all the effect he possibly could into this part, when reading the play in the green-room, in the hope of inducing Munden to play it. The comedian listened, without a comment, until

the conclusion, and then pithily remarked, with a significant look, "It won't do, George."

May 10, Cooke performed Iago, for Mr. Cooper's benefit at Drury Lane. The second Mrs. Pope (late Mrs. Spencer), a very clever actress and amiable woman, was taken seriously ill on the stage, to the great alarm of the audience, and was obliged to be removed. She died a few days afterwards, and was buried in the same tomb with her husband's first exemplary wife, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

May 16, Mr. Colman opened the Haymarket, with a company of his own, chiefly selected from the provincial boards. Amongst the number, was Mr. Matthews, from York,—the comedian who afterwards attained to such deserved celebrity,—and Mr. Blisset, from Bath, who played Falstaff, and who is reported to have been a performer of comic parts far above mediocrity, though he never made a stand in the metropolis. The Liverpool Theatre was offered for sale: the chief bidders were, Messrs. Lewis and Knight, and Messrs. Munden and Bannister (so says the Monthly Mirror—qy. Fawcett?) The former sent in the highest tender. It was an unlucky *miss* on the part of Munden, for the new proprietors acquired during their management large fortunes.

The Liverpool managers opened with great spirit. They had newly decorated the house in a very elegant manner, and engaged a strong company, a part whereof was allured from the London boards. The first performance, after an address written by T. Dibdin, was "Speed the Plough," in which Mr. Knight performed his original character of Farmer Ashfield; Sir Abel Handy, Mr. Simmons; Miss Blandford, Mrs. Mountain; Robert Handy, Mr. Young. On the succeeding nights, Emery played in "A Cure for the heartache," and Mrs. Glover in "The Jealous Wife;" Mr. Lewis, in a variety of characters, and Mr. Cooper in Richard and Macbeth. A novel idea seems to have struck the proprietors.* "A prize brought into Liverpool (French) had on board thirty gentlemen and ladies. The manager, humanely wishing to soften the rigors of captivity, politely offered them a free admission to the theatre, which they with joy accepted; and they nightly attended, escorted in parties of ten or a dozen." Fawcett played in July, and was followed by Munden.

In August (1803) Munden went to Dublin with the facetious Jack Johnstone. They arrived at the very commencement of the rebellion. The body of Lord Kilwarden, who

* Monthly Mirror, vol. 16, pp. 65.

had been dragged out of his carriage, and murdered by the rebels in open day, was carried through the streets on the first morning of their arrival; martial law proclaimed; and no person permitted to be out after eight o'clock. This seemed an unpropitious season for theatrical purposes: but they hit upon the expedient of giving their performances at noon-day, and their benefits were intensely crowded. They lodged together, and Jack Johnstone catered for their dinner. He had a peculiar fondness for poultry, and when asked by his companion every morning what they should have for dinner, regularly replied with great gravity, "Suppose we have a fowl." Major Surr, the Police Magistrate, gave Munden the pike-head of the rebel chieftain, which he long preserved.

In returning to England Munden had a narrow escape. The vessel in which he intended, but was prevented from sailing with, was wrecked passing the bar. Several of the passengers were lost. Amongst the persons on board was Incledon, who had been a sailor, and who saved himself by climbing to the round-top, with his wife lashed to him. They were many hours in this perilous condition, and were at length picked up by some fishermen who saw their distress from the shore. Munden lost his baggage in the wreck; it

was valuable, as it consisted chiefly of his stage wardrobe.

The Dublin manager headed the bills with a pedantical word, implying union of talent. Soon after Munden's return to England, he gave a dinner party at his house in Kentish Town, consisting of Quin, who had acted in the country under the name of Stanton, but who was then engaged in literary pursuits, and subsequently edited the newspaper called "The New Times," Harry Johnston, George Cooke, and Tom Hill,* of pleasant memory,

* A word in reference to this inoffensive and good-natured man. Not many years previous to his death, he shewed me a letter from one of the finest scholars and greatest poets of which England can boast, now dead himself to that literature which he has so long adorned. It contained these expressions: "I am glad to see you, my old friend, after so long an absence; and to see that Time has laid his hands upon you so lightly." Alas! that Time should at last have laid his roughest hand upon him! upon him whom the good humoured witticism of one friend represented as having been born before the great fire of London; and another, as one of "the eternal Hills." I will not say, "we could have better spared a better man;" but I will say, we could not spare Tom Hill: he was a necessary adjunct to society. Those who have read of him as Theodore Hook's "Mr. Hull," and how he prided himself on the abundance of good things around him, will understand the earnestness with which, even in his last moments, he raised himself, upon seeing the nurses at his closet, and exclaimed, "There they are at work upon my thirty years' old brandy." His "pooh! pooh!" still seems to ring in the ear. T. S. M.

then chief proprietor of the "Monthly Mirror." The word in question being the subject of criticism, Quin insisted that it was not an English word; whilst Munden as vehemently urged that it was, and offered to back his assertion by a bet of 100*l*. Mrs. Munden, alarmed lest her husband should lose his money, ran up stairs for a dictionary, and a latinism was presumed to decide the question. Cooke, who had offered no opinion, but who was half drunk, then fell foul of the *literary man* with all the bitterness of his sarcasm, and became so insufferably galling, that Quin's temper forsook him, and he rose to decide the question by a manual argument. The host got between the combatants, took George Frederick by the arm into the next room, and locking him in, returned to appease the irritated author. The feast was broken up by the departure of the guests, the door unlocked, but Munden, knowing his man, would not suffer him to remain in the house all night; the footman led, or, rather, conveyed him to the nearest public-house, where a bed was prepared for him. After each successive glass of brandy and water, Cooke rose higher in his attempts to bamboozle the landlord. He represented himself as a person of great consequence and wealth, who intended to leave all his property to Mr. Munden's eldest daughter. This was followed by sundry other conceits,

until falling asleep, wearied with the vagaries of his own imagination, he was carried to bed. The next morning, when sent for to breakfast, it was found that he had departed, on foot, for town.

## CHAPTER IV.

John Kemble and Cooke on the same stage—Ill success of their *amicable arrangement*—Our actor in Scotland—Frogmore fête—The Young Roscius—The country gentleman's mishap—"School for Reform"—Emery in Tyke—"Who wants a guinea"—First appearance of Mr. Liston—The sensitive tailors—Mr. Hargrave's sudden departure from the stage—Claremont and George III.—"Mother Goose"—Munden's Sir Bashful Constant—"Town and Country"—Remarks on "The Wheel of Fortune," and Kemble's Penruddock—First appearance of Mr. Young—Anecdotes of Mr. Lewis—Cooke out of gaol—Revival of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"—Munden in Launce and his Dog Cæsar.

"SPEED THE PLOUGH" was the performance at the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in the season commencing Sept. 12, 1803, with the usual cast. Mr. Cooke afterwards made his first appearance in Kitely, which he played with great skill and effect. He was now placed in direct contrast on the same stage with Mr. Kemble, who, with his sister, Mrs. Siddons, his brother Charles, and Mr. H. Siddons, was engaged at this theatre. An amicable arrangement was effected between Cooke and Kemble, whereby each agreed to play, occasionally, second rate parts to the other; but it some-

how or other occurred, that in the selection of the parts, Kemble's were generally very good second rates, whilst Cooke's nearly receded to third rates. The latter saw through this, and resented it in his usual way, by marring the performance through the brandy-bottle or absentation. He cared little for the audience, and knew he was too valuable to be dismissed. The first result of this "amicable arrangement" was on the 3rd Oct., when Kemble played Richmond to Cooke's Richard III. Oct. 6th, "Douglas" was performed: Old Norval, Kemble; Glenalvon, Cooke; Douglas, H. Siddons; Lady Randolph, Mrs. Siddons. 17th, "Pizarro:" Rolla, Kemble; Elvira, Mrs. Siddons; Pizarro, Cooke. The smothered flame of discord now broke forth. Mr. Cooke betrayed "evident marks of indisposition," and was utterly unable to proceed. After a few ineffectual efforts, he withdrew from the stage amidst violent uproar, and Mr. H. Siddons played the part in his stead. Jan. 9, 1804, Henry IV., part 2nd, advertized for this evening, was obliged to be postponed on account of Mr. Cooke's illness. When these illnesses occurred, Brandon, the box-keeper, who knew his haunts, was generally despatched to look after him. On one occasion, when all topics of persuasion had been exhausted, he bethought himself of appealing to Cooke's loyalty, which with him was a pas-

sion, and said, "George, the king is at the theatre; will you keep his Majesty waiting?" "Is he," exclaimed Cooke, rising, with an oath, "then I'll shew his Majesty such a piece of acting as he never saw in his life;" and went quietly to the theatre. We have dwelt at some length on matters not appertaining to our subject, because the appearance of the rival tragedians, and of Mrs. Siddons, on the the same boards, was an epoch in the history of Covent Garden, and rendered comedy for a time unfashionable. Dec. 17th, "Henry IV., part 2nd," *did* appear. Kemble, as King Henry; Charles Kemble, as the Prince; Cooke, Falstaff; and Munden, Justice Shallow. Cooke gained great applause as Falstaff, and Munden added to his reputation by his acting in the Justice. Our hero afterwards played in two original pieces: "The Paragraph," an opera, by Prince Hoare, composed by Braham; and "The Will for the Deed," a comedy, by T. Dibdin.

In the summer recess, our actor performed eight nights at Glasgow, after Master Betty (the Young Roscius), who was then making, by slow degrees, his triumphal progress from theatre to theatre towards the field of his fame —the metropolis. At Glasgow, Munden drew crowded houses, and had a "bumper benefit" (110*l.*)—numbers being sent from the doors for want of room. Thence he repaired to

Edinburgh, where his success appears to have been different, according to the following report at the time:—"Mr. Munden was with us, I think, eight nights, and performed some of his most attractive characters. To enlarge upon the *vis comica* of this very great actor in a London work, 'would be wasteful and ridiculous excess,' and equally absurd as a dissertation upon the science of Kemble, the force of Cooke, and the comic talent of Jordan.

"Sorry am I to state, that this greatest of comedians frequently performed to the smallest of audiences (one or two did not exceed 25*l.*) The very best London comic actor does not always succeed here. I believe Bannister alone added to his fame in Edinburgh.

"I esteem the Sir Robert Bramble of Munden (in "The Poor Gentleman") a *chef d'œuvre* in acting. It was doubtful whether genuine humour or unadulterated feeling was most predominant, or more finely depicted.

"Munden's Scrub did not equal my hopes: I thought it inferior to that of Quick. The overdoing a character, rendered by the author ridiculous to the last verge of probability, is like caricaturing a caricature. The laugh it excites is too much akin to that at Bartholomew Fair to please me in a Theatre Royal.

"Munden's Jemmy Jumps may be admired

by those who understand the character. I can easily conceive the mere extemporaneous effusions of half a dozen good comic actors may excite merriment either at Frogmore or any Dutch fair; but, in a farce like this, supported as I saw it, the powers of Munden, amidst the surrounding dulness, were like illuminating a whole theatre by a single light, only making

'Darkness more visible.'"

The allusion to Frogmore refers to a morning fête given by King George III., in the open air, at which some of the London performers were commanded to attend, and stationed in different parts of the grounds to sing and afford amusement to the royal guests. His Majesty having expressed a wish for a repetition of some song of Incledon's or Munden's, it was respectfully intimated that they had to perform at Covent-Garden in the evening, and that the time was approaching. "Then, pray," said the good old King, "go at once. I will not have my people disappointed;" and, turning to the Prince of Wales, "George, oblige me by seeing Mr. Munden and Mr. Incledon to their carriage." His Royal Highness, with his usual affable deportment, took each of the actors by the arm, and, the police-constables making a passage through the dense crowd, walked with them

to the spot where their post-chaise was in waiting, saw them into it, and shook hands at parting.

Previously to returning to London, for the winter season, Munden visited Liverpool, with Fawcett, and Emery. They had for their benefits, respectively, 278*l.*, 206*l.* 13*s.*, and 234*l.*

Oct. 8, Miss Duncan (now Mrs. Davison) made her first appearance at Drury-Lane, as Lady Teazle—a bold attempt after Miss Farren and Mrs. Abington—and performed the character with great éclat. The father of this lady was in our actor's Chester company; and, if we mistake not, Munden was Miss Duncan's godfather.

Covent-Garden opened in September; and, on the 5th Oct., Cooke appeared in Sir Pertinax, "and was applauded to the very echo, that did applaud again."

Dec. 1, The anxiously-expected prodigy—the "Young Roscius"—after a journey, which seemed an ovation, reached the London boards. His reception was so remarkable, that we trust we may be excused for departing for a space from our subject, and giving some account of his first appearance, from the pages of our useful friend, "The Monthly Mirror" (vol 18, p. 420):—

"The loud fame which preceded Master Betty's arrival in London, produced a degree

of curiosity unknown in the annals of the theatrical world. So great was the anxiety to behold this youthful performer, that several persons sought to conceal themselves in the house on Friday night, in the hope of remaining there, unperceived, until the returning night. So early as twelve o'clock on Saturday, the approaches to the various parts of the theatre were besieged by people clamorous for admission; and between one and two they became crowded. The managers, anticipating this result, had taken every precaution against its consequences. A great number of Bow-street officers and constables were called in to preserve the public peace, and prevent riot and confusion. A large party of soldiers were also stationed at the several doors, to protect the people against the necessary and fatal result of the indiscriminate rush of such an immense tide. About half-past four o'clock the crowd became so great, that most serious apprehensions were entertained for the lives of several persons, who were fainting away under the pressure, and to whom, in the midst of the impenetrable mass, no assistance could be afforded on the outside. It was therefore thought advisable to open the Bow-street door, though a full hour earlier than usual, with a view to accommodate the besiegers, and relieve them from the pressure which they had so long endured. In an instant the tide rushed

in, and took possession of the exterior door and the bar at the lobby, where the entrance-money is received. As only one can pass at a time, and some delay is necessary, for the receipt and examination of the money and tickets, the slowness of the movement of those in the van but ill accorded with the impatience of those in the rear. The pressure in that part of the lobby became infinitely greater, and its effects more alarming, than they had previously experienced in the open street. They broke all the windows on each side of the entrance, for the benefit of the air; yet the heat and pressure still continued so great, as every moment to threaten suffocation. A board was now displayed, announcing that the boxes were all full. This communication, however, though corresponding with the fact, did not operate to diminish the pressure, and they continued rushing in with impetuosity until after six o'clock. One-half at least of all those who suffered this fatigue and danger, were obliged to return ungratified. Nearly the same confusion that prevailed without was observable within the house, in the early part of the night. The pit was almost instantly filled by persons who leapt into it from the boxes; and many battles took place with the Bow-street officers, who were endeavouring to secure the places for those who had retained them. The few parties who reached their

seats were guarded by an escort of constables. The confusion did not abate even upon the rising of the curtain." Mr. Charles Kemble came forward to speak an address, written by Mr. Taylor,* of prologue celebrity, which told of

> "A youth your favour courts, whose early prime
> Derides the tedious growth of ling'ring Time;
> Mature at once, when Nature urged, he strove,
> Starting, like Pallas, from the brain of Jove."

---

* John Taylor wrote more prologues and epilogues than any man living, then or since. He was the author of the rhymed tale of "Monsieur Tonson." It is not so generally known that he was the original of Sneer, in "The Critic." Dangle was a Mr. Dives, a very ill-natured person, who, with his brother, held some share in the theatre. The *good-natured* Dives once accosted Charles Bannister, during a rehearsal, with the question, "Pray, Sir, did you see my brother cross?" (*i. e.*, cross the stage) "Sir," replied the sarcastic Charles, "I never saw him otherwise." Henceforth he never lost the *sobriquet* of "Cross Dives." "Sir Fretful Plagiary" was a spiteful attack upon Cumberland, which came with a bad grace from Sheridan, who stole from Fielding, the Duke of Buckingham, Vanbrúgh, and Congreve, and even from himself. It is supposed that the provocation was a remark reported to have been made by Cumberland, at the theatre, on the first representation of "The School for Scandal;" but Cumberland asserts in his Memoirs that he was at Bath at the time. Cumberland was a gentleman and a scholar—qualities in which he might challenge a comparison with the manager who libelled him. His translations in the *Observer* are hardly surpassed by the best in our language,—Dr. Carey's "Dante," and "Wallenstein," by Coleridge.

It could not be very pleasant to Mr. Charles Kemble, considering the station he held in the theatre, to blow the trumpet before the youthful aspirant, but every thing gave way to the overwhelming torrent of public acclamation. Still the tumult continued, and not even Mr. Taylor's nonsense lulled it. "The pressure was so great in the pit, that several men were overcome with the heat, and lifted up into the boxes, from whence they were carried out of the house." Little of the first act of the play (Barbarossa) was heard. "At length the youthful hero entered. It is not possible to describe the tumultuous uproar of applause which marked his reception. He was hailed with

'———————— shouts
Loud as from numbers without number.'"

This is not the place to discuss the merits of the "Young Roscius." Opinions differed at the time, but even the most moderate considered that he possessed extraordinary abilities, greatly aided by the skilful instruction of Mr. Hough. Mrs. Siddons, though more than one effort was made by the critics to extort from her an expression of opinion in accordance with the fevered pulse of the public, could only be induced to say, "He is a clever boy;" and, with the stern spirit of Portia and Volumnia, she kept proudly aloof from the scene of noise and madness. No one would repu-

diate more than Mr. Betty himself the extravagant encomiums of his early idolaters, some of whom pretended that he left Garrick at a distance, and bade Kemble and Cooke "hide their diminished heads." The writer saw "The Young Roscius" in "Oronooko" and "Douglas," but was too young to form a judgment of his acting. He recollects the ease and grace with which, after kissing the ground, he recovered himself, in "Oronooko." Mr. Betty afterwards played in his maturer years, but was then as strangely neglected as he had been immoderately eulogised. He walked at a later period in a procession, in honour of Shakspeare, as Hamlet, and personified the character, though in dumb show, with great judgment, and correct expression.

The public, not satisfied with fostering the efforts of this clever boy in his professional capacity, took the care of his health out of the hands of his parents, and Mr. Betty, sen., was obliged to address a letter to the newspapers, which contained the following sensible remarks:—"It cannot but be painful for a parent to feel himself under the necessity of making stipulations with the public, that he will not be a careless or negligent guardian of his son. In any other case such a necessity would imply suspicion of the father; in the present I am aware that it has been

produced merely by a solicitude for the son. Under this impression, I can have no objection to pledge, in the most solemn manner, that, whilst I will use every means to prevent my son from injuring his health, by too great and frequent efforts of his, I will take care that the fortune and fruits of his efforts shall not be destroyed nor impaired by any improper conduct or negligence of mine."

When indisposition *did* occur, occasioned, doubtless, by the excitement in which the boy was kept by the popular frenzy, both in and out of the theatre, bulletins were regularly issued by his physicians, and the street in which he resided was blockaded by the carriages of the nobility, who waited, in long succession, to leave a card at his door, and inquire after his health.

With the waywardness of a petted child, who, when it has a new doll, breaks the head of its former favourite, the public, not satisfied with applauding Master Betty, must needs hiss the other actors that appeared on the scene with him. On the very first night, they began with Mr. Hargrave, a gentleman of highly respectable connexions, whose real name was Snow, and who having a *penchant* for theatricals, had quitted the army to indulge in it. Mr. Hargrave had always acquitted himself creditably as an actor, and had never met with disapprobation until this oc-

casion: how he revenged himself for such unjust treatment, will be related hereafter.

The managers of Drury-lane, anxious to reap some of the ears of this golden harvest, engaged Master Betty at their theatre also, where he appeared on the 10th of Dec. with the same rapturous applause.

Such a fortunate youth was not likely to remain without imitators; and, accordingly, in process of time, a host of Roscii, of both sexes, presented themselves to public view, until the metropolitan theatres seemed threatened to be transformed into temples of Lilliput.

Before dismissing the subject of "The Young Roscius," we must relate a whimsical occurrence which is said to have taken place during one of his performances. A country gentleman, who had come to town on business, was anxious to report to his neighbours that he had seen this fashionable phenomenon. He had but one night to spare, but he resolved to devote it to the theatre. He took his station in the avenue to the pit; but, unfortunately, among the last of the throng. It was the custom when the pit was full, to fasten the folding doors by a screw. Our country visitor, in the vortex of the rushing crowd, was turned round with his back to the stage. From such a position it was impossible that he could extricate himself. In this

"no room for standing, miscalled standing room," he listened to the affecting accents of Young Norval,—scene after scene,—but he never saw him! When the play was ended the screw revolved, and he was released from his durance, with the barren consolation of being able to report to his country friends, that he had *heard* "the Young Roscius," of whose person and figure he could not form the slightest conception, except from report.

The success of Master Betty gave the comedians something like a holiday. Munden, who, in later days, when personally acquainted with Mr. Betty, held him in much esteem, was long ere he beheld his performance as a boy. Though he played frequently after him in the farce, he had seen so much of acting that he felt little curiosity to behold the prodigy which all the town ran after. One night arriving a short time before the conclusion of the play, he walked to the side scenes, and listened for a few minutes till the termination of the last act.

Tom Dibdin's Muse revived the drooping Genius of Comedy, in an opera, entitled "Thirty Thousand, or Who 's the Richest," and on the 15th Jan. 1805, Morton gave to the theatre, his "School for Reform." This comedy brought into prominent view the hitherto dormant talents of Emery. In his performance of Tyke, a returned convict, he

exhibited a picture of remorse, which challenged a high station in the noblest exhibitions of tragical effect. His merit in the performance of countrymen was forgotten in this powerful display of agonized feelings. Munden played Gen. Tarragon, in the "School for Reform." Emery gained another laurel in the part of Bang, a drunken Yorkshire huntsman, in a new comedy by Colman, called "Who wants a Guinea?" Comedy it is called, but broad farce it certainly is. Still the humour in the scenes of Solomon Gundy, the rat-catcher, and the capital equivoque between Torrent and Jonathan Oldskirt, are worth a hundred sentimental pieces. Munden played Torrent, an improbable conception, and Kemble, Barford, a very indifferent part. Fawcett was very great in Solomon Gundy, and Simmons showed much cleverness in Oldskirt. May 22, Kemble played Othello and Cooke Iago, for Mrs. Lichfield's benefit, and had for a spectator the Young Roscius, from the stage box. Mrs. Siddons performed after a severe illness, Lady Macbeth for her son's benefit, and the season closed on the 15th June. June, 10 1805, Mr. Liston, from the Newcastle Theatre, made his first appearance at the Haymarket, in the character of Sheepface, in the "Village Lawyer," and was most favourably received.

A singular circumstance occurred this sea-

son at the Haymarket. Mr. Dowton chose for his benefit "The Tailors, or a Tragedy for Warm Weather," which had many years before been brought forward by Foote. So soon as it was announced, Mr. Dowton was assailed by anonymous letters, of which the following is a specimen that merits to be preserved.

August 12, 1805.

Sir,

We Understand you have Chosen a Afterpiece to Scandelize the Trade, and If you persist in It, It is likely to be Attended with Bad Consequences, therefore I would Advise you to Withdraw It, and Subtetote Some Other, and you may depend on a Full House.

Your humble Servant,
A Taylor and Citizen.

To Mr. Dowton,
No. 7, Charing Cross.

Mr. Dowton, with proper spirit, disregarded this insolent menace, and determined to proceed.

Early in the afternoon, an immense crowd, chiefly consisting of tailors, assembled in the vicinity of the theatre; and when the doors were opened, rushed into the galleries and pit, where they began shouting and knocking the floor with their sticks in the most turbulent manner. When the curtain rose Mr. Dowton came forward, but could not obtain a hearing; a pair of scissors (query shears) was

thrown from the gallery, and fell very near the actor, who offered twenty guineas reward for the discovery of the person who threw them. Papers were then handed up to the gallery, with an assurance that the piece should be withdrawn, and the "Village Lawyer" substituted in its stead; but nothing would satisfy the "Knights of the Thimble," who continued more vociferous than ever. At length the managers sent a message to Mr. Graham, the magistrate at Bow Street, who speedily arrived with some officers, and having sworn in several extra constables, proceeded to the galleries, and, instantly seizing the rioters, took ten or twelve of the principal ringleaders into custody. They were next day held to bail. The performance of The Tailors did however take place, in despite of the sensitiveness of the professors of that useful art. When the curtain drew up, and discovered on the stage *three tailors seated on a board*, the rage of the malcontents broke forth again, until the Bow Street officers made their appearance a second time, and dragged some of the offenders out; order was then restored. In the mean while a mob assembled outside the theatre, but a detachment of the horse-guards, which had been despatched in aid, kept the street quiet, whilst constables, stationed in different parts of the house, checked any fresh disposition to riot.

Had this spirited example been followed at the commencement of the O. P. row, the managers of Covent Garden Theatre would have been spared much expense and annoyance, the respectable portion of the audience the interruption of their rational amusement, and the public the shame and scandal of such proceedings.

Both houses commenced the season in September with strong companies. At Covent Garden, where Mr. Kemble was installed acting manager, a difference having ensued between that gentleman and Mr. Braham, Braham and Signora Storace removed to the other house. The Covent Garden managers, much to their shame, attempted to bring forward a bold child of the name of Mudie (a female Roscius only seven years of age) in the character of Peggy in "The Country Girl;" but the good sense of the public was beginning to return, and, after evincing great marks of disapprobation throughout the piece, the audience stopped her performance at the commencement of the fifth act. Mr. Kemble was compelled to undergo, in his capacity of stage manager, the humiliation of soliciting permission for Miss Mudie to finish the character, which was refused amidst a storm of hisses.

Dec. 25, Mr. Hargrave, receiving the same illiberal treatment, during the performance of Barbarossa, that he experienced on the first

night of Master Betty's appearance in the previous season, quietly retired to his dressing room, and disrobing himself of his theatrical costume, quitted the theatre. As we before stated, Mr. Hargrave had not embraced the profession of the stage for its emoluments. He, therefore, made no appeal and gave no explanation, but at once resolved to quit for ever a scene where he was subject to insult. He had the satisfaction, if he sought it, of knowing that the audience had, by their own act, spoiled their evening's entertainment, for his part was obliged to be *read* by Mr. Chapman.

Another gentleman whom the "liberal" audience chose to hiss was Mr. Claremont, who had been before them for years, and was most useful to the theatre, being what is called a good study. He had played almost every thing, and could supply the place of a superior performer in cases of illness or emergency, without the awkwardness of reading the part, whilst his retentive memory enabled him to study any new part at the shortest possible notice. But the usual sphere of his acting was third rate characters. A kind and well-meant commendation of Mrs. Siddons, that he was a good level speaker, made him excessively vain. Many are the stories told of his vanity. On returning from the country, after the vacation, Mr. Harris, who really had

a regard for him, for want of something to say, inquired, "Well, Claremont, what have you been playing in the country?" "Richard, once, sir, and Hamlet twice." "What, *twice*, Mr. Claremont?" was the manager's reply. Munden, walking once with his son in the the streets of Margate, met Claremont, whom he accosted with the inquiry, whether he came down there to act. "No, Sir," said Claremont, "I come here to be amused, not to amuse!" King George the Third, who was fond of chatting with the actors, stopped Fawcett walking with Claremont on the Terrace of Windsor Castle, and eyeing Claremont through his glass, said, "Eh, Fawcett, eh, eh! who is that with you?" "Mr. Claremont, please your Majesty." Claremont bowed to the ground. "Claremont—Claremont—Oh, I recollect! Bad actor! Bad actor!" Claremont, who was a good looking man, was a great lady-killer, and is reported to have done much execution in that pleasant warfare. When the O. P. row took place, some of the ruffians who figured in it attempted to drive this respectable actor from the stage, by hissing him whenever he appeared. Mr. Harris, with laudable firmness, resisted the base attempt to deprive a deserving man of his bread. This really harmless gentleman remained for many years afterwards in the Covent-Garden company, and is probably still living.

Munden, at this time, had one of those attacks of the gout, which afterwards became so frequent. His illness stopped Colman's farce of "We Fly by Night," during the progress of its representation. He was sufficiently recovered in April to play in Dibdin's musical romance of "The White Plume."

After "The Birth Day," was performed at Covent Garden, the Christmas pantomime of "Harlequin and Mother Goose." Who has not heard of the fame of Mother Goose (Simmons), and of Joe Grimaldi, the clown? All former pantomimes were eclipsed by this master-piece of fun, as all former clowns were by Joe. It is impossible to describe what he did. A thousand masks would not portray the grotesque contortions of his countenance; and his humorous and lively action drew shouts of merriment both from "children who are young, and children who are old." Mother Goose proved a goose with golden eggs to the theatre. It was the joint composition of Tom Dibdin and Farley, and their memory deserves to be immortalised for hatching such a production. The predecessors of Grimaldi, as the clown in pantomimes, were his father and Follett, who depended entirely on their feats of agility. Munden once played the clown, during the indisposition of Follet, and endeavoured to make the interest rest upon

humorous expression and knavish dexterity, which was more ably accomplished by Joe Grimaldi, who added to the perfection of these qualities the agile leaps and tumbling of his progenitor. The comedy of "The Birth-Day" seems to have been popular this season; it was played again a few nights afterwards. Munden performed, also, Sir Bashful Constant in Murphy's "Way to Keep Him;" upon which we find these remarks: "It has been questioned whether this drama is improved by the admission of this strange character; but that it is so, in the highest degree, none would doubt who had seen the *Sir Bashful* of Mr. Munden. A more rich and humorous piece of acting is not to be found in all his performances; and that is saying much." Munden being again attacked with gout, Mr. Liston played Polonius in his stead. Liston very properly endeavoured to restrain his wonderful powers of humour; but, in the attempt to look grave, his countenance was so irresistibly droll, that Mr. Kemble could hardly pronounce the injunction, "Good, my Lord, will you see the players well bestowed."

March 10, Morton brought forward his "Town and Country." Trot, which was intended for Munden, was, in consequence of his illness, played by Blanchard. Reuben Glenroy was an attempt to write another Pen-

ruddock for Mr. Kemble, but with far inferior ability. We learn from Mrs. Inchbald that Cumberland took the idea of "The Wheel of Fortune" from reading in a foreign newspaper the plot of "The Stranger." He conceived the notion of altering the character of the deceived husband into that of a disappointed lover; and, by that means, getting rid of the indelicacy of the Stranger's reconciliation with his adulterous wife. So skilfully has he effected the alteration, that, as Mrs. Inchbald remarks, the two plays may be performed on successive nights, and nobody, unaware of the fact, would suspect that one was borrowed from the other. If this was what Mr. Sheridan meant by plagiarism, it does not accord with his simile,—of "Gipsies disfiguring other people's children to make them pass for their own." No doubt Mr. Cumberland, in sketching the character of Penruddock, had Kemble in his eye; and never did that great actor,—no, not even in the higher parts of Macbeth and Hamlet,—appear to such advantage. His dignified demeanour displayed the qualities of a polished gentleman shining through the coarse garb of a rustic. His energy in the scene with Young Woodville,* and the faltering tone in which he uttered the remark,—"You bear a strong resemblance to your

* Young Woodville, by Charles Kemble, and Mrs. Woodville, by Mrs. Powell, were acted to perfection.

brother,"—the subdued tenderness of his manner towards Mrs. Woodville—his polite bow after the classical compliment—"True, madam, but the sons of Cornelia did not disgrace their mother!" and the summoned firmness with which, when preparing for his last interview with Woodville, he delivered the words, "Such meetings should be private," could not be, and never have been surpassed. The part was played in succession by Mr. Cooke, Mr. Young, and the Elder Kean; by the latter with indifferent success. But as a counterpoise to this failure, Mr. Kean played Reuben Glenroy very finely; the latter part is, nevertheless, a poor copy of the former. The misanthropy of Penruddock arises from a natural cause, but the moodiness (for that seems the term) of Reuben Glenroy can only be traced to envy of his elder brother. It has been observed of "The Terence of England," that in his two best plays,—"The Wheel of Fortune" and "The West Indian,"—he portrays young ladies making love to the young gentlemen.

"Town and Country" was very successful. We shall have occasion to speak of this play again on its re-production at Drury Lane.

April 3, Munden played in the "School for Reform," for the first time after his illness, and was warmly greeted by the audience.

On the 10th, he appeared in the "Birthday."

Mr. Young, from the Manchester Theatre, was engaged in the summer season at the Haymarket, and came out in "Hamlet." It is surprising that an actor, possessing, even at that time, such extraordinary excellence, had not before reached the metropolis. His merit was at once appreciated and acknowledged. Mr. Young declined, after the Haymarket closed, engaging at Drury Lane, where Elliston was the indifferent representative of tragedy, and returned into the country, leaving an established reputation behind him.

Munden played at the opening of the Manchester Theatre, recently rebuilt, and under the management of his friend Macready, who had taken a lease of it.

Sept., 1807, Covent Garden opened, but without Mr. Cooke, who was missing. Munden performed Sir Francis Wronghead (Provoked Husband) to Kemble's Lord Townley, Miss Brunton's Lady Townley, and Miss Bolton's Lady Grace. Both these ladies became peeresses in earnest; Miss Brunton espousing the Earl of Craven, and Miss Bolton, Lord Thurlow. Lady Craven (Dowager) is aunt to that clever actress, Mrs. Yates. Oct. 9, presented Mr. Richard Jones to a London audience in Goldfinch. Mr. Jones, though not

equal to Lewis, was, perhaps, the nearest approach to him. He had more mercurial spirits, but less humour than Elliston. This gentleman has now quitted the stage. It will be a long time before an actor, such as Lewis was, will again be seen. He truly seemed to consider the audience as "the fourth wall of a room;" and ran upon the stage, tossing his hat and gloves upon the table, as much at ease as in his own drawing-room. The freedom of his movements formed a striking contrast to the stiff management of the limbs which some otherwise good actors can never overcome. Such was his extraordinary vivacity that it was rather dangerous to play with him in a part of excitement. In one scene he threw a chair at Munden, who was constantly on the stage with him, and narrowly escaped doing him an injury. On another occasion, he forgot he was pretending to horsewhip, and laid the whip in earnest on his shoulders; but they were the best of friends, and acted together father and son *con amore*. Like all first-rate actors, he played equally well to the last. He performed, as we have seen Mr. Smith did, youthful characters when on the verge of sixty, and his buoyancy of spirits kept up the delusion. He was, however, obliged to *make up* a little. He wore false teeth, false whiskers, and false calves. It was not an unusual thing to see a whisker, half

unloosened, sticking up in the air. As he was standing once by the side-scenes, a waggish actress employed herself in sticking pins into one of his false calves. When she had satisfied her whim, much to the amusement of the by-standers, she tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "Why, Lewis, somebody has been making a pincushion of your leg." Though the lady had been occupied some minutes in this pastime, Lewis affected to draw up his leg in agony, and swore he felt the pain. Mr. Lewis was for many years stage manager at Covent Garden Theatre, and was much respected by his fellow performers, towards whom he was indulgent and courteous. He had a son, who played at Liverpool, and was engaged for a short time in London, and who strongly resembled him in person, and in his style of acting. In private life, Mr. Lewis was an upright man, and polite gentleman. He acquired, as before stated, an ample fortune by his last speculation.

March 10, 1808, Mr. Cooke, who had been in Appleby gaol for debt, made his bow again to a London audience as Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant, with the usual overwhelming applause. 12th, Munden played Launcelot Gobbo to his Shylock, and the house continued to overflow in consequence of the reappearance of this favourite of the town. April 25th, he made a little free in Richard, but the

audience, far from assigning the true cause, discovered, in each lapse of memory, a studied pause; and in every stagger, a new point. April 21, Mr. Kemble revived "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," in which Munden played Launce, greatly to the satisfaction of the public, barring some gross allusions, which should have been retrenched, and were properly hissed. The actor brought with him on the stage his Newfoundland dog, Cæsar, who, also, misbehaved himself in various ways. In the scene where the dog is roughly handled, the animal, not understanding *making belief* in such matters, seized his assailant by the leg.

Our comedian had now a fit of the gout, which laid him up for the remainder of the season. This malady, though not the cause of his death, became his frequent companion ever after. He was attended, as a friend, by Dr. Pearson, Dr. Hooper, Sir Matthew Tierney, and Sir Charles Scudamore; but those eminent physicians could not eradicate the pre-disposition to this painful disorder. Once, at Liverpool, he took, of his own accord, the *Eau Médicinale d'Husson;* this violent remedy enabled him to rise from his bed, and return to town; but he suffered for his rashness by a confinement of several months, not occasioned by gout, but by an entire prostration of strength. The late Earl of Essex, with whom

he was on friendly terms, and who was an equal sufferer, persuaded him to try Dr. Wilson's Tincture, and he derived benefit from it; but, latterly, as the fits became less acute, he abstained from all gout medicines, and merely had recourse to quiet and repose.

## CHAPTER V.

The "Portrait of Cervantes"—Destruction of Covent Garden Theatre by fire—The Covent Garden company at the King's Theatre and the Haymarket— Morton's "Exile"—Tobin's "School for Authors"—Criticism on Munden in Diaper—Ceremony of laying the first stone of the New Theatre—Drury Lane Theatre burnt down—The Haymarket in Chancery—Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Mattocks quit the stage—Opening of New Covent Garden—The O. P. row—Mr. Kemble and Mr. Clifford's compact—The Piazza Coffee-house—The Beef-steak Club—Anecdotes of the Duke of Norfolk—New Performers—Anecdotes of little Knight and Tate Wilkinson—Open house in the Poultry—A bit of Salt.

June 21, 1808, Munden played for his benefit "Laugh when you can." The "Portrait of Cervantes" (1st time) and "The Turnpike Gate." The new farce was a translation from the French, by Mr. Grefulhe, the banker, who sent it to Munden, but desired his name not to be mentioned. On these occasions, and they were not a few, the bantling was laid to the charge of Mrs. Munden, who was known to amuse herself by dramatic composition. If the piece failed, she had all the demerit; if it succeeded, the vanity of the author let out the secret; in no case did she derive any of

the profits. "The Portrait of Cervantes" was very successful, and Mr. Grefulhe politely begged Mrs. Munden's acceptance of a case of Constantia wine. He, also, liberally presented our actor with the sum of one hundred pounds, which the managers, in continuing the representation according to privilege, had paid to the author. On the 20th September, Covent Garden Theatre was destroyed by fire. The loss of life that occurred in attempting to stop the progress of the flames was most deplorable. Amongst the property destroyed were the scenery and wardrobe, all the musicians' instruments (their own property), several dramatic pieces, and musical MSS. of which no copies remained, including the original scores of Handel, Arne, &c., and Handel's famous organ, bequeathed by him to the theatre. The insurance did not amount to one third of the loss. Munden, again, lost his wardrobe, which he valued at £300; but the wags made merry at his expense, asserting that when his trunk, recovered from the wreck off Ireland, to which he had assigned a similar value, was brought to him, and five guineas reward claimed, he flew into a passion, and swore it was not worth five shillings.

The company found a temporary asylum at the King's theatre, where they commenced performing, so early as the 26th, with Douglas, and Rosina. Mr. Kemble addressed the

audience, on the rising of the curtain, in considerable agitation, alluding to the recent calamity, and assured them that the managers were already preparing to construct a new theatre. Mrs. Siddons played Lady Randolph; Mr. C. Kemble, Norval; and Mr. Barrymore, Glenalvon, in the absence of Mr. Cooke, who was gone to be married, and *could not come.* That gentleman, however, played Sir Pertinax on the 14th, and met with his usual flattering reception. Nov. 10, Morton's opera of the "Exile," founded on the novel of Elizabeth, by Madam Cottin, was brought forward at this theatre—Daran, Mr. Young; who had at length engaged at a winter theatre, with a large salary; Count Ulric, Pope; Count Calmar, Incledon; Baron Altradorf, Liston; Servitz, Fawcett; The Governor, Munden; Catherine, Mrs. Dickons; Alexina, Mrs. H. Johnston. Munden had little to do; but Fawcett had a good part, and was encored in his comic song "Young Lobski," written by Mr. Colman. Mr. Young played Daran in the most impressive manner. The vocalists, also, were highly applauded. This piece had a very successful run. The Covent Garden company now removed to the little theatre in the Haymarket, which was liberally offered to them by Mr. Colman, commencing with the Mountaineers, and a new farce, entitled "A School for Authors," the

production of the late Mr. Tobin, author of "The Honey-moon," whose singular fate it was, to have all his pieces rejected during his life-time, and eagerly sought for after his death. As in the Honey-moon he had imitated Shakspeare, so in the "School for Authors" he borrowed from Foote. Munden played the principal character, Diaper, the author, a kind of Sir Fretful Plagiary, and in varying the personification lay the difficulty. The following criticism seems to imply that he overcame it: "Mr. Munden is the hero, and when we thought that he had reached the top branch of the tree, he has found another shoot, on which he has perched himself, and overtopped all his former elevations. To steer clear of the identical Sir Fretful was difficult, but Mr. Munden has succeeded, by avoiding the formal dress of an author, and by the extraordinary variety and genius of his acting. In the scene where he opens his mind to Cleveland, about the tragedy; in that where he overhears Frank reading it to Susan; and, perhaps, above all, in that where Jane humours him in all he believes about its excellence, he exhibited such bursts of comic talent, as none shall hope to surpass." This is high praise: we quote it to show that our actor's popularity was still in the ascendant.

Dec. 30, 1808. The first stone of the New Theatre, in Covent Garden, was laid by His

Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, attended by the Duke of Sussex, The Earl Moira, and Colonel Bloomfield; and deputations from all the Masonic Lodges in the metropolis assembled to meet the Prince, their Grand Master.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Kemble, both wearing the insignia of Masons, received His Royal Highness at his carriage, and conducted him to a *marquee* erected near the stone. The streets were lined with the Life Guards, and infantry stationed to keep off the crowd. With martial music and a salute from twenty-one guns, the ceremony commenced. A covered platform was filled with spectators, who all rose to welcome His Royal Highness, the band playing "God save the King." The front seats were filled by ladies, amongst whom sat—"the observed of all observers"—Mrs. Siddons! His Royal Highness, sprinkling corn, wine, and oil on the stone, concluded the ceremony by returning the plan of the building to Mr. Smirke, the architect, and bowed to Messrs. Harris and Kemble, with the expression of a wish for the prosperity of the theatre—a wish that has not yet reached its accomplishment. Two months after this event, Drury Lane theatre was in flames. It was supposed by many at the time that these conflagrations were the work of incendiaries; but there seems no reason to doubt that both were the result of accident. Mr. Sheridan was in the House of Commons,

when the blaze of light illumined St. Stephen's Chapel. It was proposed, from sympathy in that gentleman's loss, to adjourn the debate, and he gained great credit for magnanimity for refusing to allow his private concerns to interfere with the business of the nation. All this was a solemn farce: the real sufferers were the actors, many of whose salaries had not been paid for a long time previously; and the renters, whose money lay buried in the ruins. The late Drury Lane Theatre was said to have cost £129,000, and was insured for £35,000. The debts were estimated at £300,000. The Drury Lane company left with the "good wishes" of Mr. Sheridan (who after parting with them, changed his mind, and desired, unavailingly, to encumber them again with his assistance) obtained with some difficulty a licence from the Lord Chamberlain, and Mr. Taylor's permission to perform at the King's Theatre, for three nights gratuitously, and three more on paying a sum for rent, by which arrangement the families of the humbler adherents to the theatre were saved from starvation. They opened their performances at the King's Theatre on the 16th March, 1809, and, on the 11th April, occupied the Lyceum.

The Covent Garden Company, at the Haymarket, played (Feb. 10th) "Is he a Prince?" another translation from the French by Mr. Grefulhe; principal characters by Liston, Faw-

cett, Munden and Mrs. Davenport. May 1, Munden took for his benefit, The English Fleet, Rival Soldiers, and Lock and Key. 5th, Mrs. Siddons was announced for Belvidera, being "*the last time she will ever act that character.*" 17th, The Mountaineers, for Mr. Liston's benefit; Octavian, Mr. Liston.

In Easter term, the Haymarket Theatre opened on a new site—the Court of Chancery; Sir Samuel Romilly moved the Court, on behalf of Messrs. Morris, Winston, and others, to remove Mr. Colman from the chief management of the theatre, on the ground that he was unable to discharge the duties of his situation, being a prisoner for debt in the King's Bench. The answer to this objection on the part of the defendant's counsel (Mr. Hart) was that, *being in the Bench, he was sure to be found at home.* The Lord Chancellor intimated that the parties had better settle their differences by arbitration. The plaintiffs chose Mr. Crawford, a barrister, and the defendant Mr. Harris, the rival manager; and each party objected to the arbitrator on the other side. The Lord Chancellor considered Mr. Harris "a very unfit person for an arbitrator" in such a case, and postponed his judgment. "I will not now," said his Lordship emphatically, "attempt to insinuate what the decision will be, but I feel confident it will be *disagreeable to all the parties.*" This hint

was taken, and the matter withdrawn for the time.

"The Monthly Mirror," in announcing, at this season, the rumour that Drury-Lane Theatre was about to be rebuilt, adds this stringent inquiry—

"Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando!"

Happy for the parties, *quibus auxiliis* the theatre was ultimately rebuilt, if this rumour had only been a surmise!

June 10, the Drury-Lane Company closed their season at the Lyceum, and Mr. Wroughton addressed the audience on the part of the performers, the chief of whom had been great losers by contributing to the distresses of their poorer brethren. The Covent-Garden Company finished at the Haymarket, on the 31st May, and Mr. Young returned thanks on behalf of the proprietors, with the announcement that "their new theatre was covered in." Two days previously, Mr. Lewis performed for the last time, taking for his benefit, "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," in which he played the Copper Captain, concluding with an address to a crowded audience, which he delivered with great feeling.

The stage lost, also, another of its treasures —Mrs. Mattocks. We are sorry to relate, that, after many years passed in this arduous profession—for Mrs. Mattocks was nearly

the oldest actress on the stage—she was deprived of the fruits of her industrious exertions. When she retired, she had amassed a sufficient fortune, which she placed in the hands of a near relative, in whom she had great confidence, and whom she supposed to be in good circumstances. This gentleman died suddenly some years after, and it was then discovered that he had been for a long time insolvent. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mattocks, on her retirement, had ceased to subscribe to the Covent-Garden Theatrical Fund, to which she had been an early contributor, and thereby forfeited all claim to relief from that quarter. So universally, however, was she esteemed, that several of the performers subscribed among themselves, and purchased a small annuity for her support.

The new theatre, in Covent-Garden, which had been erected, as it were by magic, within the short space of ten months, opened its portals to the public on the 18th Sept., 1809, with the prices of the boxes raised from six to seven shillings, and the pit from three shillings to four shillings, and an entire tier of boxes reserved for private accommodation. The excuse was—the expenditure of *one hundred and fifty thousand pounds*—"in order to render the theatre worthy of British spectators, and of the genius of their native poets." "Macbeth" was the opening piece. "All in

the Wrong" would have been a more appropriate prelude: for difficult it is, even at this time of calm reflection, to assign to each party its adequate share of absurdity or ill-conduct. The aggregate must be divided between the proprietors of the theatre, the magistrates, the Lord Chamberlain, and the public. When the old theatre was in ruins, Mr. Kemble was reported to have said, "Now we will have the finest theatre in Europe;" and, in his speeches from the stage, he termed his new edifice, "the most beautiful theatre in the universe, for the reception of the inhabitants of the capital of the World:"—a foolish boast, which was accomplished at the expense of public decency, and the loss of a fortune on the part of those who embarked in this futile speculation. No sounder truth can be expounded than that one and one do not, in all cases, make two; and the supposition, that because a theatre supported by good actors is constantly filled, the same result would follow the construction of a building of double the size, is contradicted by all experience. The Haymarket Theatre, under proper management, has always been productive; and never did the really good actors appear to such advantage as on its boards—because the audience could see and hear them. The huge mausoleum beneath which was buried the greater part of Mr. Kemble's industrious

and well-merited earnings, was wholly uncalled for; and the public resented, but not in a proper manner, the attempt to extract from their pockets a sacrifice to Mr. Kemble's hobby. The generality of stage frequenters knew nothing, and cared still less, about the beautiful groups in low relief, and statues by Rossi and Flaxman, which decorate the exterior; but they desired, and not unreasonably, that as all theatrical performances of a high order were controlled by two patents, one of which was in abeyance, they should not be exorbitantly taxed, or their families debarred from their usual recreation, to gratify the whims, or fill the pockets of two gentlemen, who, when they planned their lofty scheme, had held no consultation with those who were to pay for it. Of all parties, Mr. Harris, the chief proprietor, was perhaps the most to be pitied. Mr. Harris, who had originally been a soap-boiler, purchased the patent and property for an amount not largely exceeding the sum at which (in its improved state, with the gradual accumulation of scenery and stage properties) he sold to Mr. Kemble a sixth share. The increase of the value was, however, mainly owing to Mr. Harris's judicious management, watchful selection of eminent provincial actors, as their rising reputation brought them to his notice, liberality towards the performers, and the large prices which he

cheerfully paid for the productions of such dramatists as Cumberland, Colman, Morton, Reynolds, O'Keefe, Dibdin, &c., who preferred the ready money of Covent-Garden to the promissory notes of the rival house.

Mr. Harris had, at the time of the destruction of the late Covent-Garden Theatre, accumulated a large fortune: he died in moderate circumstances. Being aged and infirm, he seldom, latterly, quitted his residence at Uxbridge, intrusting the management of the concern to his son, Mr. Henry Harris, and Mr. John Kemble. That these gentlemen believed they were furthering his interests as well as their own, when they entered into this expensive outlay, nobody, who has ever heard of them, can for a moment doubt; but they were mistaken. They began with a war on the public, —that hydra-headed monster,—and they conducted the war badly. The public did not care where they were lodged, and would have been contented with any secure building having four walls and sufficient accommodation, provided the entertainments were such as they had been accustomed to witness. But the proprietors were "cursed with a taste." They must needs take architecture and sculpture under their protection, and expected John Bull to pay for the arts, as well as the art of acting. Even the expedients they devised to fill their treasury were injudicious. They engaged Ma-

dame Catalani at an enormous salary, when the cry was for "native talent;" and they apportioned a whole tier to private boxes, when the most irritating subject was their monopoly. They expected the cooped-up spectator to pay an advanced price for his seat in the "pigeon holes," whence he looked down on the favoured aristocracy, sitting at their ease, concealed by gilt lattices, and retiring at the termination of the acts to drawing-rooms behind the boxes, which gave rise to much unmerited scandal. Having once engaged in the contest, the proprietors should have taken such steps as would have commanded success; but they hesitated, vacillated, and, like all persons who adopt middle measures, fell between two stools. They began by apologising and appealing; then hired pugilists, lamplighters, watermen, and Bow-street officers, to beat the spectators into submission; when it was discovered that this would not do (for the *men of war* found that a pitched battle on the pit benches, hemmed in by an enraged multitude, was a very different thing from one in the ring, with plenty of room for shifting and dropping), Mr. Kemble had again recourse to apology and appeal.

Messrs. Read and Nares, two of the Bow-street magistrates, came on the stage to *address* the audience, and were hissed off. If they had not power to read the riot act, what

business had they there?* The Lord Chamberlain sent a message to Mr. Harris, that the peace of the town must not be disturbed by these riotous proceedings; and that, if the difference with the public could not be settled amicably, the theatre must be shut. Verily, the Lord Chamberlain held "a barren sceptre in his hand," if he could do no more than this; besides, it was unfair to both parties: the public did not want the theatre shut, but open at the old prices; and the proprietors ought not to have been held responsible for riots which were committed by others in their house, and which they could not control. At length, Messrs. Harris, Kemble, and Co., referred a statement of their accounts, sworn to by their treasurers, to the Recorder, the Solicitor-General, the Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Charles Price, and John Julius Angustein, Esq. The two first learned gentlemen were not the fittest arbitrators to choose in matters of accompt; however, the investigation took place, occupying only a few hours, and a report was signed by all the referees, containing the astounding assertion, that on the average of the

* Mr. Kemble averred that they came of their own authority, and that he knew nothing of their coming, until he read of it next morning in the newspapers. The conduct of these guardians of the peace on the very first night of the disturbance was an indication of weakness, and encouraged the rioters to proceed.

last six years, the profit on the capital embarked in the concern had not exceeded $6\frac{3}{8}$ per cent., per annum: but had the theatre been fully insured, there would only have been 5 per cent.; that, at the advanced prices, the profits of the new theatre would only amount to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., per annum; and, if the old prices were restored, the proprietors would sustain a loss of nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. The respectable names affixed to this report do not allow the supposition of any intentional delusion, either on their part, or on that of Messrs. Kemble and Harris; but it should have been seen how much, in this hurried inquiry, was taken for granted in the calculation of the future, and whether the estimated expenses were necessary. Plain men wondered that Mr. Kemble should have given 22,000*l.* for a sixth of such a hopeless adventure; and (as the last mentioned result ought to have been contemplated) that individuals could be found so simple as to borrow, and others to lend their money only for the sake of losing it. The details of these strange proceedings do not properly belong to the "Life of Munden," although he played every night, of course, in dumb shew, as did his brother performers, during the O. P. war, so termed from being a war for the old prices. Munden attempted to address the assemblage on the first night of the disturbance, but was relieved by Mr.

Kemble. The polite spectators (they scorned to be auditors), were very civil to the actors, with the exception of the Kemble family, male and female, whom they hooted without mercy. One ruffian threw a bottle at Mrs. Charles Kemble, with a brutal exclamation, referring to her then delicate condition. Will it be believed that English ladies could be induced to crowd the boxes night after night, surrounded by men in the garb of gentlemen, (striking each other down on the benches near them, for a difference of opinion,) and listening to the coarse harangues of barbers, bank-clerks, and briefless barristers; witnessing, without a shudder, the frightful leaps from the boxes into the pit, as the Bow-street myrmidons rushed forward to make their captures; and hearing, without a blush, the most indelicate allusions to the presumed object of the private boxes? Alas! what will not fashion do when excitement is to be afforded?

The O. P. warriors, after baiting Mr. Kemble every time he made his appearance, calling upon him for explanations, and then interrupting him, marvelled that he lost his temper; and his brief question: "Ladies and gentlemen, *what is it that you want?*" when what they wanted was sufficiently apparent, was said to savour of that casuistry which is taught at the Roman Catholic college (Douay), where that gentleman had been educated. The

only redeeming feature in this spectacle was an occasional bit of fun in some of the numerous placards which were exhibited in the boxes and pit, torn down by the boxers and officers, rescued and remounted with equal ardour to that which animates the ensign who adheres to his colours in the strife of mortal combat. The chief of them consisted of libels on Mr. Kemble, but the following *jeu d'esprit* is not a bad resumen of the general question:—

"THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT."

"This is the house that Jack built.

"These are the boxes let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"These are the pigeon-holes over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the cat engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is John Bull with a bugle-horn, that hissed the cat engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the thief-taker shaven and shorn, that took up John Bull with his bugle-horn; who hissed the cat, engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

"This is the manager full of scorn, who RAISED THE PRICE to the people forlorn; and directed the thief-taker, shaven and shorn, to take up John Bull with his bugle-horn; who hissed the cat engaged to squall to the poor in the pigeon-holes over the boxes, let to the great, that visit the house that Jack built.

Bow, Wow."

It is needless to add that Catalani relin-

quished her engagement. She despaired of introducing notes of harmony into such a place of discord. Madame Catalani was to have had 5,000*l.* for the season, and two benefits; and to have played and sung in English operas. It would have been a complete failure. She was taught with great difficulty to repeat the words of "God Save the King," and "Rule Britannia."

Having mentioned thus much of the first O. P. war, we may at once state the mode in which it was brought to a conclusion. Bills of indictment having been preferred against forty-one of the rioters at the Westminster sessions, the grand jury, after a strong charge from the chairman (Mr. Mainwaring) in favour of the managers, found true bills against twelve; "those for hissing, hooting, barking, whistling, and speechifying, including one bill against Mary Austen, a female O. P., for springing a penny rattle, being all thrown out." Again were the rattles, bells, horns, and trumpets, in motion. Mr. Clifford, a barrister, became the O. P. king, and, being taken before the magistrates, was released, after observing, that "had he been a poor tailor, they would have held him to bail," as they had done others. Mr. Clifford thereupon, brought an action for false imprisonment against Brandon, the box-keeper. Chief Justice Mansfield gave his opinion "that the public had no

right to express their dissatisfaction at the new prices in the way they had done;" but the jury, after hearing the declaration of Mr. Serjeant Best, Mr. Clifford's counsel, that "he never saw a more harmless set of people in his life than these rioters;" found a verdict for the plaintiff; damages—five pounds! Sir James Mansfield "expressed much regret at the verdict, from which he fancied very ill consequences were likely to result."

The Covent Garden proprietors, who had declared that nothing should induce them to submit, now saw the necessity of bending before the storm. At a dinner given by the O. P.'s to commemorate their triumph, Mr. Clifford presiding, that gentleman announced Mr. Kemble's presence in the ante-room, and stating that the managers had offered such concessions as, in his (Mr. C.'s) opinion, were reasonable, moved that he should be admitted, bespeaking for him an attentive hearing and polite reception. Mr. Kemble, accordingly, appeared in this novel and embarrassing situation; and, after some oratory, the following resolutions were agreed to:—

"1st. That the private boxes shall be reduced to the same state as they were in the year 1802.

"2nd, That the pit shall be 3s. 6d.—the boxes, 7s.

"3d, That an apology shall be made on

the part of the proprietors to the public, and Mr. Brandon shall be dismissed.

"4th, That all prosecutions and actions, on both sides, shall be quashed."

A complimentary toast was then proposed, and Mr. Kemble withdrew to the theatre, where, from the stage, he read the resolutions to the audience; some hesitation, however, being apparent with regard to the 3rd, he was not allowed to proceed; but a placard was thrown on the stage, with the words "Discharge Brandon," which was taken up by Munden, dressed in his full-bottomed wig, as King Arthur in "Tom Thumb." It is remarked that in that costume he was a very fit messenger, meaning, we presume, that the two parties (the public and the proprietors) were Noodle and Doodle. Brandon came upon the stage, but the audience refused to listen to him, unless *he went upon his knees*, and he fearlessly declined complying with so humiliating a command. Mr. Henry Harris came forward to intercede, but with no success. The next night Mr. Kemble announced that Mr. Brandon had *withdrawn* from the theatre. The fact was, the circumstances having been reported to old Mr. Harris, he recommended Brandon to retire for a while from the theatre, promising that his salary should be paid to him for the remainder of his life; but adding, that if he had submitted to degrade himself as

he had been required to do, he should have been dismissed without a farthing. No doubt Brandon's zeal for his employers had outstepped the bounds of discretion, but he was an old servant of the proprietor, and much of what he had done must have been done by their orders. Mr. Harris's determination was honourable to his feelings as a gentleman, and his unshaken courage as a man. Mr. Harris was then bedridden.

Among the sufferers by the late fire at Covent-Garden who expected redress on the rebuilding, were the members of the Beef-Steak Club—whose room in the Piazza Coffee House, partly on the premises of the theatre, had been burnt—and Mr. Solomon, the celebrated cook of that agreeable establishment, from whose domain—the kitchen—four feet were abstracted to secure a private entrance to the theatre for no less a personage than his Majesty. Mr. Solomon was with difficulty persuaded to accord this boon; but his loyalty prevailed over the minor consideration of personal privation. Had he been unrelenting, Royalty must have entered the theatre with the mob; for, at the Piazza Coffee House, Mr. Solomon had a voice "potential as the Duke's;" ay, as the Duke of Norfolk, one of his chief-patrons. This eminent *artiste* (as it is now the fashion to call his successors) was accustomed to stand, habited in the cap and white jacket—the

badges of his honourable profession—at a door, opening on the splendid coffee-room, and, surveying his well-known admirers, who saluted him with many a nod, ponder what he should provide for their several tastes, for which he well knew how to cater: nay, he would not always allow them to indulge in their *own* tastes; for he who pens these paragraphs, well remembers that his dinner was once deprived of its chief *agrément*—marrow-bones, which, for some *raison de cuisine*, the great cook would not introduce. After the conclusion of *his* performance, Mr. Solomon was in the habit of witnessing the performances at the theatre, dressed in his best attire, with ponderous gold watch and chain, and traversing the stair-case from the Piazzas with the stride of a person who knew his own value. Far be it from us to depreciate the sacrifice which we have recorded of Mr. Solomon, but certain it is, that the proprietors complimented him with a free admission to the new theatre.

The Beef-Steak Club, held at the Piazza Coffee House, had for its patron, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; for its president, the Duke of Norfolk; and its honorary secretary, Joseph Munden. The steaks were dressed in the room, and served up hot from the gridiron. The members presented to their secretary a silver goblet, with a suitable in-

scription, and the following lines from the pen of their poet-laureat, Tom Dibdin:—

"This token accept, and, when from it you sip,
Give a thought to those friends who implore most sincerely,
You may ne'er find deceit 'twixt the cup and the lip,
But prove Fortune, like Munden, kind, honest, and cheerly."

The motto of the club was, "Esto perpetuâ ad libitum!" and they obeyed its directions. Among the members were Mr. Maberly and Mr. Const. Some were late sitters. A gentleman who is no more, but who was a partner in a banking firm in Lombard-street, was wont to say, that "no man required more sleep than could be obtained in a hackney-coach between Hyde Park and Lombard-street"—and he exemplified his precept by his practice. He seldom departed until necessity forced him. It was his duty, as junior partner, to open the iron safe in the morning, and he calculated the time of his journey into the city exactly. On arriving at the banking house, he took a glass of vinegar and water, gave the key to the confidential clerk, and repaired to bed for an hour or two.

The Duke of Norfolk, the chairman of the Beef-Steak Club, sat as long as he could see, but when the fatal moment of oblivion arrived, his confidential servant wheeled his master's arm-chair into the next room, and put him to bed. The Duke frequently dined alone in the coffee room. He ate and drank enormously;

and though the landlords (Messrs. Hodgson and Gann) charged as much as they reasonably could, it is said they lost money by him. His mean apparel and vulgar appearance gave rise to various ludicrous mistakes. On one occasion, he desired a new waiter, to whom his person was not familiar, to bring him a cucumber. The order not being immediately attended to, he called to the waiter, who respectfully intimated that, perhaps, he was not aware that cucumbers were then very expensive. "What are they?" said the Duke. "A guinea a-piece, sir." "Bring me *two*," was the reply. The waiter went in dismay to the bar—"That shabby old man in the corner wants two cucumbers." "Take him an hundred if he asks for them," said Mr. Hodgson. The Duke of Norfolk, being a great lover of the drama, was in the habit, after thus privately dining, of walking into Covent-Garden theatre. He took his seat in the dress-boxes, and immediately fell asleep. At the close of the performance, he rose much edified and amused, was assisted by the box-keeper in putting on his great-coat, and to his carriage by his servants, waiting in the lobby.

We have not attempted to describe the acting at Covent-Garden theatre, during a period when nobody was allowed to be heard. The Lyceum, in the meanwhile, was growing into notice, under the successful management of

Col. Greville and Mr. Arnold, who made an arrangement with Mr. Sheridan; that active gentleman having contrived, as he expressed it, to "to keep part of the Drury-Lane company together."

In the autumn (1809) three new provincial performers made their appearance at this theatre:—Mr. Wrench, who still continues on the stage; Mrs. Edwin, who has quitted it; and Mr. E. P. Knight, who is now deceased, but whose memory is held in kind remembrance by all who knew him—by none more than the individual who makes this mention of his worth. It is unnecessary to say more of Mr. Wrench than that he is one of the best light comedians extant; or of Mrs. Edwin, who played at Drury-Lane until a late period with great effect, in the line of Mrs. Jordan. By that kind-hearted woman she was highly complimented, with most disinterested feeling, on her first performance of Beatrice. The new actress was the widow of the son of the famous Edwin. The younger Edwin had been a great favourite at Bath, &c., but did not possess the extraordinary talents of his father. Mrs. Edwin was a very pretty woman, and displayed peculiar archness and vivacity: we trust she still lives in the enjoyment of health and happiness.

In mentioning his deceased friend, Mr. Knight, the writer cannot refrain from relating

one of the many anecdotes which that very clever actor communicated so readily, regarding his earlier career, and which he told inimitably. Mr. Knight was apprenticed to a heraldic painter, either at Sheffield or Birmingham, which occupation he quitted for the stage. On his first appearance, he said, carrying a stick and bundle, he was seized with such alarm that he threw down both bundle and stick, and ran off the stage, to which he could not be persuaded to return. The manager addressed him gravely: "Mr. Knight, you will never make an actor; it is useless to persist: but, if you will be obstinate, find out the lowest stone in the country, and put your foot on it." This lowest stone was a strolling company, somewhere in Wales, which performed in a bedroom, the bedstead serving for the stage, and the two spaces on each side for the tiring-rooms of the respective ladies and gentlemen performers. These spaces were concealed from the audience by curtains. The actors ascended the stage by steps. Mr. Knight commenced with Acres, in "The Rivals," and was greeted with torrents of applause. He began to think he had reached the *acmè* of the art; but the applause so far exceeded the bounds of moderation, that he looked round to discover if any other cause existed to occasion it, and beheld the bare posterior of one of his fellow-comedians, who had uncon-

sciously protruded it through the curtain, whilst in the act of putting on his stockings. Stung with disappointed ambition, he struck the offender with his shoe on the intrusive part of his person, and quitted the scene. He afterwards joined other companies of higher rank, and finally engaged with Mr. Wilkinson, at York, to succeed Mr. Matthews. His humorous correspondence with Wilkinson is well known. The following letter from Tate, concluding the engagement, has not before been published:—

Wakefield, Sept. 20.

Sir,

Let me know when you wish to come, but let it be as soon as convenience and propriety will permit—as much success in a theatre is dependent upon lucky circumstances. Mr. Matthews was subject to fits, but the last year not to so very great a degree. The week before last he had a very dreadful one, but it was kept a profound secret from me; but on Friday night was so alarmingly ill, he was never expected to be in his senses again: could not finish Quotem, *nor act last night*—indeed, all day yesterday he was much deranged: got better last night, and has been foolish enough to go on horseback twenty-two miles to meet a party of friends to dinner. I fear to-morrow. It is observable that people, who are so unfortunate to have fits, won't have it supposed any dangerous accident has occurred, and rush into absurdity. He is a great favourite. I know your cast perfectly well. You shall play any two parts you like, but it is impossible to ascertain a cast. If Mr. Bennett goes, there will be plenty. If Mr. Matthews relapses, I shall want two comedians. Necessity will oblige me to keep you. As I wish you fame and not to lose it, I will get up any two plays, or any two farces, *not* in

the *catalogue*. Your opening shall be appointed as you wish. I must drop the idea of journey; but Mansfield, one of your towns, would have been easy. Close here, the 27th; open Doncaster, the 28th. D. salaries—York Summer Assizes, York Races, Pontefract Races, and Doncaster Races; *half* at Wakefield. York to Leeds, twenty-three miles; Wakefield, nine miles from Leeds; nine from Wakefield to Pontefract; twenty from here to Doncaster; by water, to Hull; thirty-eight from Hull to York. Hull and York, and Hull seasons, from the beginning of November until the end of May.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

TATE WILKINSON.

From York is certainly in favour at London—so many have done greatly.

Mr. Matthews did not go many miles, only a pleasant ride, yesterday.

*Mr. Knight, Theatre, Oswestry, Warwickshire.*

Tate Wilkinson had acted under Garrick and Foote; and, if we are to believe his memoirs, acted tragedy and comedy with equal effect. The truth is, he was a bad actor, but a good mimic; and Foote encouraged him, to annoy Garrick. Although a great master of the art of mimicry himself, Foote is said to have been outdone by Wilkinson; and was greatly piqued, when Tate, after *showing* up other actors, began a fresh imitation, telling the audience, that now "he was going to imitate Muster Foote." Bred in such a school, it is not extraordinary that Wilkinson should have been a perfect judge of acting.

York, Bath, and Liverpool, have generally

been the nurseries whence the London managers sought for new prodigies. Mrs. Siddons may be said to have come from Bath, though she had been in London, unregarded, for a short period before. Mr. Young, from Liverpool and Manchester; and to Tate Wilkinson, and York, the metropolis was indebted for Mrs. Jordan, Emery, Matthews, Fawcett, Knight, and Lovegrove. The interview between Mr. Lovegrove (who will be mentioned hereafter) and Wilkinson, when the former solicited an engagement, was curious. Wilkinson had the habit of calling people by wrong names,—a habit which he adopted from Rich, who was the manager of Covent-Garden Theatre in his early days. Even Mr. Garrick is reported not to have been free from this affectation. Rich—who knew little of acting, chiefly depending on pantomime, in which he was a great proficient (playing himself Harlequin, under the fictitious designation of Lunn)—was incessantly pestered with troublesome applications on the part of new claimants for public approbation. He was an eccentric man, and used to carry about with him a large black cat. Being desirous of reflecting a little, before he committed himself in his answer to any of these aspirants, he used to stroke the back of the cat, exclaiming, "Poor pussy;" and, in a moment or two, say, "Well, sir, what do you want with me?" Wilkinson stole this

peculiarity for the purpose of obtaining notoriety. When Mr. Lovegrove was introduced, he found Tate occupied in knocking a nail in the wall, to hang up his watch. Without discontinuing his employment, or looking at his visitor, Tate said, "What parts can you act, *Mr. Musgrove?*" "I act Hamlet, sir."—"Mr. Kemble acts Hamlet, *Mr. Cosgrove;* what else?" "Othello, sir."—"Indeed; but can you knock a nail in the wall, MR. COX?"

Wilkinson was in the habit of sitting in a snug corner of the gallery to witness the effect of the performance. He had a son, who entertained a great predilection for the profession, but was a very bad actor. One evening, Wilkinson, in his favourite seat, overheard a sailor say to another, "Jack, that 's a d—d stick; I 've a great mind to hiss him." "Do," said Wilkinson; "I 'll give you half-a-crown, if you will." It was done accordingly; and old Tate came down to the green-room to enjoy the effect. Seeing his son walking up and down the room in great discomposure, he inquired what was the matter. "Sir," replied the victim, "some scoundrels have hissed me off the stage." "I know it, my son," replied the senior; "I paid them to do it."

From York, Mr. Knight came to London, making his *début* in Timothy Quaint, and Robin Roughhead—the latter part he played very finely. The essence of Mr. Knight's acting

was a feeling of good humour, which he entertained towards all mankind. He was very clever in decrepit old men; but in country boys he chiefly excelled. The greatest representatives of countrymen that have been seen during the last half century, were the first Knight (who certainly surpassed his successors), Emery, and little Knight. Emery was a very fine actor, in more than one line; but, in countrymen, he was always a Yorkshireman. The late Mr. Kean, in a criticism as ingenious as it was well expressed, said, "Emery is the countryman of the inn-yard, but Knight is the countryman of the woods." The two latter possessed other accomplishments besides acting. Emery was a tolerable musician—(we believe he played the violin in the orchestra at Munden's theatre)—and he sketched very well. Knight also was a good draughtsman, and possessed no mean powers of literature. He wrote some dramatic pieces, and most of his own songs. He used to read these to his friends; and complimented Munden, jun., by saying that he was "a good listener." In private life, Mr. Knight was a most respectable man, an exemplary husband and father, and devoted to his domestic circle, from which he rarely removed.

Having already invoked Tom Dibdin's Muse, we will give another instance of the readiness with which he summoned her to his

aid. We must premise that actors were (perhaps are) engaged by the season, or for a term, but paid by the night—*i. e.*, for every night that the theatre continued open, which did not include holidays, Lent, &c., and the accident of death in the Royal Family, when all theatres are closed out of respect. In 1805, the season consisted of about two hundred nights. Those, therefore, who, in forming an estimate of an actor's income, would endeavour to arrive at it by multiplying fifty-two by the amount of his weekly salary, will see that they could only obtain an erroneous result, not to mention the sick clause to which we have before alluded. The remainder of a performer's emoluments consisted of his country engagements, and his benefit. To make a good benefit, it was necessary to enter into convivial society, and to have a large circle of acquaintance. Incledon, from the advantage of his vocal powers, always had the first benefit, in point of amount, and Munden the second. It has been said that Munden was as frequently seen upon 'Change, about benefit time, as the merchants who "most do congregate" there; and this has been attributed to him as humiliating—we cannot see upon what grounds. Though all his friends knew he had tickets in his pockets, he never solicited any body to take them, and, to tell the truth, many of those who asked for them forgot to pay.

Amongst Munden's city acquaintance was the late eccentric Wm. Geary Salte, Esq. This gentleman was an extensive Manchester warehouseman in the Poultry. He had kept what he called open house on Saturday for half a century. The company at this time consisted generally of Sir Nathaniel Dance, (who gallantly beat off the French squadron, under Admiral Linois, in the Indian Seas, and saved the East India Company's home fleet—in this action Munden's son, Valentine, was present,) of Mr. Sharpe, M.P., the friend of Canning, better known as "Conversation Sharpe," Mr. Ramsbottom, M.P., Mr. Jonathan Brundrett, Mr. Munden, his son Tom, some other expected guests, and a customer or two, who might drop in about dinner time. Punctually as the hour came, grace was said, and a round of beef placed upon the table before the host; a large plum-pudding occupying the space before his nephew, who faced him. The host helped himself, and the joint was passed to his guests in succession, who did the same. After dinner, Joe was called upon for a song; and, the hour of nine arriving, the guests rose simultaneously and departed. One Saturday morning, Munden, happening to be at rehearsal, met Tom Dibdin, who had been reading a comedy, and, bethinking himself of his good-natured host, asked Dibdin to *improvise* something appropriate, giving him the general out-

line. Tom took up a pen, and, without hesitation, put down on paper the following—

BIT OF SALT.

I.

Of songs about war, and political folks,
We all have grown tired, and stale are our jokes,
Then above common subjects suppose we exalt
The Muse at this season to sing about *Salt*.

II.

For many a relish to Salt we 're in debt,
Without him no Salt to your porridge you'd get;
Plum-puddings and black ones, like beer without malt,
Would, in winter and summer, be flat without *Salt*.

III.

Being all honest Britons, why 'tis my belief,
That all *round* me are fond of a good *round* of beef;
Yet what beef would like *ours*, without any fault,
Have been kept fifty years, if it wasn't for *Salt*.

IV.

When Saturday comes, we to joy give a loose,
When the Poultry we seek is not turkey or goose,
But brave cut-and-come-again, who wouldn't halt
At the house hospitality seasons with *Salt?*

V.

Neither Cheltenham, Epsom, nor Glauber, I mean,
Nor salts that are volatile, acid, marine;
Yet Joe Munden's odd ditty, whate'er you may call't,
Should please, since each stanza boasts genuine *Salt*.

VI.

In the hall of our host may good fortune prevail;
Long, long may he live, and his spirits ne'er fail;
May old Care be interred in the family vault,
While the sweetest of bumpers we fill shall be *Salt*.

Nobody but Dibdin would have written such a song; and nobody but Dibdin *could* have written it off-hand. When the call came, Munden, who had carefully committed the stanzas to memory, broke forth in this unexpected ditty. Mr. Salte, with looks of astonishment, exclaimed, "Why—why—why—Joe, where the devil did you get that from?" and believed it was an *extempore* effusion.

Mr. Salte was much esteemed by King George IV., and was visited at his handsome villa at Tottenham by some members of the Royal Family. He left a daughter, and a nephew. Though reputed very rich, his property, being invested in bad securities, did not realize much. He bequeathed legacies to most of his intimates—amongst the rest, one of 100*l.* to his friend Munden, which under the circumstances was never claimed.

## CHAPTER VI.

The petition for a third theatre referred to the Privy Council —Argument of Mr. Warren, counsel for the petitioners— Counter-petitions of Messrs. Harris and Kemble, Mr. Sheridan, &c.—O. P. again—Munden and Cooke at Liverpool—Departure of Mr. Cooke for America—Anecdotes of Cooke, and remarks on his acting—Death of O. P., and Anthony Pasquin's Epitaph—The horses at Covent Garden—Timour the Tartar—Romeo Coates—Difference between Munden and the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre—Correspondence—Munden's secession from the theatre.

It cannot be a matter of surprise that the differences between the public and the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre, during the inaction of the Drury-Lane proprietors, now dormant as their patent, which was termed by the lawyers "the sleeping beauty," should have suggested to others the speculation of a third theatre. Accordingly, a petition was presented to the House of Commons, and leave given to bring in a bill; and another petition was laid before the Privy Council, praying for a charter of incorporation. The petitioners

were—the Right Hon. Thomas Smith, Lord Mayor of London; the Hon. Montgomerie Stewart, M.P.; Richard Ramsbottom, Esq., M.P.; Lynden Evelyn, Esq., M.P.; Anthony Browne, Esq., M.P.; Evan Foulkes, Esq., M.P.; Joshua Jonathan Smith, Esq., alderman; Charles Hutton, Esq., LL.D.; Richard Cumberland, Esq.; William Marsh, Esq.; John Curwood, Esq.; James Taddy, Esq.; and John Wyatt, Esq. The capital subscribed was 200,000*l*. This petition having been referred to the Attorney and Solicitor General, who reported that it would be unadvisable to grant such a charter, the petitioners prayed to be heard by counsel before his Majesty's Privy Council, which permission was granted; and the arguments on their behalf were opened by Mr. Warren on the 16th March, 1810. Mr. Sheridan, with singular indelicacy, took his seat as a Privy Counsellor, and addressed the Council as his own advocate.

Mr. Warren observed—in reply to the argument that the patentees had *enlarged their theatres, as the population increased*—"But their Lordships would recollect, while they widened the area of their theatres, they *prevented the public from being entertained;* they put them at such a distance from the stage, that the countenance of the performer could not be discerned, without he distorted the muscles of his face to that degree, that, to those nearer

the stage, it appeared ludicrous; the same with the voice—it was so strained that nature was forgotten." This statement, though somewhat exaggerated, was substantially correct; but the learned gentleman might have urged, that the heavy expenses which the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre had brought forward as a reason for requiring an increase of the prices of admission, were not occasioned by the simple representation of the legitimate drama, but by gorgeous pageantry and expensive shows, which they had substituted in its stead, having, by the enormous size of their fabric, deprived all but a scanty portion of the audience of the power to see and hear. These, which they called "necessary expenses," were necessities of their own creation. Mr. Warren pertinently inquired, "How does it happen that Covent-Garden is not full, now that Drury-Lane is not in existence?" "My position," continued the learned counsel, "is this: that the houses are empty from the natural incommodiousness of them. They may be occasionally and accidentally filled by the representation of a new play, or the performance of a favourite actor, but, in general, they will be deserted from the want of accommodation. Unless these houses be totally altered, the complaint (that the new theatre would injure them) is nugatory, because we shall not take away persons from them, as they have at pre-

sent only those who can hear, and not as many persons as these houses can hold."

This statement is confirmed by the counter-petition of the trustees of Drury Lane, and also in the following passage in Mrs. Richardson's (proprietor of one-fourth share of Drury Lane) petition: "The proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre have it in their power to prove, incontrovertibly, to any person whom your Majesty in your goodness may please to appoint for investigating the fact, that their theatre (and it is supposed that they might safely add that of Covent Garden) could have held,—*taking the average of the season, and carrying that average through every season since its commencement,*—double the number it has ever received."

This is an important admission, and if made during the O. P. war would not have been lost sight of: indeed, it is probable that in the ferment then created by the obstinacy of the Covent Garden proprietors, the Petitioners might have gained their object, had they undertaken to build a theatre of a moderate size, and to charge moderate prices. Mrs. Richardson relied upon her statement as a proof that there was sufficient accommodation for the public without the necessity for a third theatre; but she did not see the stronger inference that could be drawn from it; *i. e.* if the two old theatres never held, on an average, "since their construction," more than

half the number they could contain, where was the necessity to rebuild Covent Garden Theatre on so large a scale, and with such costly magnificence? If the respectable arbitrators, whose names we have mentioned, took only for their guidance the accounts sworn to by Messrs. Hughes and Tull of the receipts and payments for six years, set down in aggregate amounts of from £50,000 to £80,000, their report must necessarily have been founded on an incorrect basis. It was not possible they could go through all the books of the theatre, but the box-keeper's book would have enabled them to arrive at the fact stated by Mrs. Richardson; and then would have come the question, not whether, without increased prices, there would be a loss to the proprietors of three-quarters per cent. per annum, but, whether, on the part of those gentlemen, there had been such a prudent outlay as justified them in calling upon the public to re-imburse them for their speculation by increased prices.

Against the petition of the subscribers to the projected new theatre, petitions were presented by the trustees of the subscribers for building old Drury Lane;—by Messrs. Harris and Mr. Kemble, on behalf of Covent Garden Theatre, in which, after stating that their expenditure had been £200,000, there appears the idle vaunt that a large proportion of the

cost of their theatre has been appropriated "to the *exterior* beauty of the building, which they venture to boast of as a public ornament, and one of the most magnificent structures that the property of individuals has ever erected in the metropolis." The other petitions were from the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Caroline, wife of T. Sheridan Esq., Mr. Elliston, Mr. Greville, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Taylor, (of the Opera House) and the trustees of Mrs. Martindale, for one fourth of the Drury Lane patent. The propositions of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Elliston are amusing. The first gentleman contends that a third theatre is not required, but, if necessary, that the proprietors of Drury Lane should have the power to erect it, under their dormant patent. It is difficult to conceive that the practised pen of Mr. Sheridan could have stated two propositions so much at variance as the following:

"That your petitioner by *no means purposes to contend* that it might not *be better for the general interests of the drama*, and the purposes for which it has so long been considered as a fit object of legislative protection, that the existing monopoly should be *wholly destroyed*; your petitioner's conviction, that the *immediate destruction of the respect and utility of the stage would be the consequence*, he entirely passes by &c."

If this were not bad logic, it was certainly bad taste in Mr. Sheridan to speak thus of the actors, by whose exertions he had, in a great measure, been subsisting for so many years of his life.

"You would in that case (the destruction of the monopoly) never see a respectable performer; for amongst that class there is a great deal of ambition, avarice, and pride, and you never could get a person to play Hamlet, at a small theatre, who had once played it at a large theatre."

This is the reverse of fact; for, not to mention other first-rate actors, Mr. Young and Mr. Elliston, within the recollection of the petitioner, had played principal parts (Hamlet among the rest) at the Haymarket Theatre; as, subsequently, did the late Mr. Kean, Mr. Macready, and Mr. Charles Kean; doubtless with more satisfaction to themselves, inasmuch as they were not under the necessity of straining their lungs, and certainly with more striking effect than in the "huge cockpits" in which the proprietors of the patent theatres chose to exhibit them.

The petitioners for a third theatre failed in their application. The argument—that they were availing themselves of the recent calamity which had befallen the two patent theatres—had some weight, particularly as regarded Mrs. Richardson, who, with her four daugh-

ters, was left almost destitute; and the force of the objection, that corporate privileges would give the new theatre an advantage over its patent competitors, does not appear to have been answered. Some entertaining sparring took place between Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Warren, the counsel for the petitioners. The former gentleman said: "As to the learned gentleman's wit, I must say that I am very much pleased with it, and therefore I will allow him to supply me with *wit*, if he in return will allow me to furnish him with *law*." To which Mr. Warren replied: "I have no wish to comment on what Mr. Sheridan has said, but I desire to decline his proposed exchange, and am contented to remain in possession of my art, and that he should keep his law."

With the exception of a slight return of O. P. warfare at Covent Garden on the 10th September (1810) there is little of dramatic interest to record, except the appearance of Mr. Lovegrove, on the 3rd October, at the Lyceum. Mr. Lovegrove played Lord Ogleby, and played it with great effect at this theatre. When he was transplanted to the larger area of Drury Lane, his voice, which was thin, could not convey the effect of his judicious acting.

The success of the O. P. riots in London occasioned a laudable spirit of emulation at Liverpool, where an attempt was made to carry on an H. P. (half-price) riot. They

managed matters better in this town. The rioters were prosecuted at the Lancaster assizes, not by the managers (Lewis and Knight), but by the *magistrates*. Mr. Baron Graham was of opinion that the evidence went sufficiently to the proof of a *conspiracy;* but, as the consequences of a conviction for that offence were so highly penal, he recommended that the count in the information for the conspiracy should be given up; which being agreed to, the defendants were found *guilty of the riot.*

Munden was at this period at Liverpool, where he had been playing, as had also Mr. Cooke. Mr. Harris, having some misgivings as to Cooke's proceedings, wrote to Munden to beg he would not leave without him, but accompany him every stage to town, in the interim keeping as strict a guard as he could on him. Munden, though labouring under a severe attack of gout, took what pains he could. It happened that there was at Liverpool at the time a gentleman of the name of Cooper, who had played some seasons in London with no great success, but, visiting America, was hailed as a prodigy, and became the American Roscius, and a manager. Mr. Cooper, who had returned to England to collect recruits, was then on the eve of his departure, and it would seem that he had held some consultations with Cooke, which probably coming to the hears of Mr. Harris, in-

duced him to write the letter, to which the following is a reply.

To Henry Harris, Esq., Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Liverpool, September 30.

My Dear Sir,

This morning I received yours of the 28th. Part of my luggage has been in town, I hope this month past. I have not appeared on any stage since the 7th. From the night I finished my engagement in this town, Tuesday, the 14th August, I have only acted five nights. I have been under medical care the greatest part of the time since I returned here, and indeed it was for that very purpose I came. Munden, who is recovering from a very severe attack of the gout, requested me to stay a day or two for him. I have done so, and yesterday I paid for both our places on Tuesday morning next, (Sunday coaches being all engaged, and not one going on Monday, the mail excepted.) On Wednesday evening we shall, I trust, reach the Golden Cross.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

G. F. Cooke.

Will the reader believe that, four days after the date of this letter, Mr. Cooke sailed for the United States of America? The deep duplicity of this proceeding was in accordance with the uniform tenor of Cooke's life; and his cool statements about the "Sunday coaches," and "reaching Charing Cross" are good specimens of that accomplished hypocrisy, which rendered him so great an actor. To add to the villainy of his conduct, he was under an engagement to Mr. Harris, and owed him a

large sum of money. Mr. Cooper thought it necessary to give some account of *his* share of the transaction, in a letter to the newspapers, dated three days after Cooke had been got out of the way. In this letter he positively denied the truth of an awkward report which was in circulation, that he "had prevailed with Mr. Cooke to quit England, when he was prevented by inebriety from exerting his judgment and free will upon the occasion." Mr. Cooper, afforded the information that his negotiations with Cooke commenced about the 6th of August, although he asserted they were not concluded until the 3rd October.

All that Munden could tell his manager on returning to London was this. Early on the morning when it was arranged they should take their departure for town, he hobbled with difficulty to Cooke's lodgings. He found him dressed,—seated in a chair; the empty brandy bottle was on the table; the last expiring glimmer of the candle was in the socket. With one eye shut, and the other dim he gazed upon his promised companion, and, in answer to his remonstrance, and assurance that they had barely time to reach the coach, hiccupped: "You be d—d." Munden knew that further intreaties would be vain, and as he had his own engagement to attend to, left him "alone in his glory."

It was at this very town of Liverpool that

Cooke had been playing on a previous occasion, when great excitement prevailed on account of the agitation of the slave-trade abolition question in parliament. Cooke fancied himself insulted, because his benefit had not been equal to his expectations; and, passing, in his usual state, by one of the principal coffee-houses, he beheld several of the merchants assembled in the rooms and vicinity. Shaking his fist at them he exclaimed: "I thank my God, I carry away none of your d—d money: every brick in your accursed town is stained with African blood!!" When he appeared afterwards on the stage, the hubbub was indescribable. He attempted to speak, but was saluted by cries of "off! off!" and a shower of hisses. Silence was at length restored, and Cooke addressed the audience in these words: "Ladies and Gentlemen, if you will allow me to go through my part, I will never disgrace myself by appearing before you again."

He then retreated to the side scenes, and said to a party there, from whom this anecdote is derived, with a satirical expression of countenance.: "It's the blood—the blood!"

The managers advertised him for the next night, with the sure card—Richard the Third and Sir Archy Mac-sarcasm. The signal of his presence was one universal hiss. Cooke advanced to the stage, placing his hand on his

breast, and bowing with affected humility, waited until the tumult subsided, and then intreated the audience to hear him. "Had I not been unfortunately interrupted, Ladies and Gentlemen," said he, in his blandest accents, "my address to you would have been thus,—Ladies and Gentlemen, if you will allow me to go through my part, I will never disgrace myself by appearing before you again *in the same condition.*" The *ruse* succeeded—"bravo! Cooke!" resounded, and he played Richard with more than his usual energy. The reader who may wish to peruse any more stories of this extraordinary man's powers of vituperation will find many in his life by Mr. Dunlop.

We have said so much of Mr. Cooke as an actor, that it seems scarcely necessary to revert to the subject, except as regards his means of acquiring information and his habits of study. To what extent he had been educated does not appear; but that he had received a respectable education was evident from the correctness of his reading, the propriety of his emphasis, and his general knowledge of his author. Beyond this it does not seem necessary that an actor's learning should extend: the knowledge of human nature is better acquired in the active scenes of life than from the books of the learned.

Cooke had seen and watched attentively

the best performances of Garrick, Barry, Sheridan, Henderson, and Macklin, and had played with Mrs. Siddons before he joined Austen and Whitlock's company. Mr. Kemble, whilst they continued upon amicable terms, used sometimes to chat with him on the subject of their mutual profession. "John," said Cooke, in one of those moments of communion, "if you and I were pounded in a mortar we should not make a limb of a Garrick!" Garrick he held in reverence, and used to repeat passages in imitation of his great predecessor in Kitely, a part in which Cooke himself excelled. He also with candour acknowledged that he had adopted a great many of his points from Henderson. The following (from one of his diaries) is a just exposure of the many pretenders to excellence in the profession of the stage. "It is common for many on the stage to say they have *studied* a character when they even know not what the expression means: their *utmost* idea of studying being to obtain a knowledge of the author's words. In all ranks and professions there are, doubtless, many whose genius or abilities are not suited to the situation in which they move, and the stage certainly has a great share—the pulpit a greater. It is grievous to behold the higher classes of society represented in a play by those whose utmost stretch of abilities does not qualify

them to appear as their attendants. There are actors and actresses, and some of them in what are called respectable situations, who are not only destitute of the embellishments of education, but are absolutely incapable of reading their native language."

Mr. Kemble, with all his excellencies, had a pedantical and studied mode of delivery, partly occasioned by his constitutional asthma, which would have been transmitted to a host of imitators, had not Cooke appeared, and re-asserted that natural delivery of the text which Garrick had initiated, and which Mr. Kean continued to preserve. But it was a great mistake to call those accomplished actors (Cooke and Kean), "children of nature," in opposition to Kemble as a "child of art." No doubt Mr. Kemble brought to his aid great classical knowledge, which aided him in costume and in the propriety of the scene. But that he studied more deeply than either of his rivals, or used more art, does not appear. We learn from Barry Cornwall's clever life of Kean, that Kean was in the habit of sitting up all night, when he had a new part, and rehearsing it before a looking-glass illuminated by candles; and Cooke was accustomed to wander for hours together in solitary spots with his part in his hand. Cooke, also, was a diligent reader of all the books that fell into his hands, and his criticisms on them in his

diaries are generally correct and well-expressed.

He also carefully scored his parts, marking the requisite shades of passion and the bye-play. He wanted the stature and finely-moulded form of Kemble; but his figure was strongly knit and his tread firm; his features were prominent and flexible; his eye-brow marked, and eye expressive; and his voice powerful and clear in his best days. His action was appropriate and commanding. In the business of the stage he was thoroughly versed. The late Mr. Pope used to term Cooke "a brown paper actor:" he certainly excelled in parts in which coarseness formed an ingredient. In Othello and Penruddock he was not great: his Hamlet was a failure, and deemed so both by the manager, who had urged him to play it, and the audience. He only performed the part twice in London. But in the Scotch characters he was pre-eminent. In Kitely, Shylock, and a great portion of Richard III, he had no rival.

He also showed considerable powers of humour in "Falstaff," and in early life played comedy with great effect. Upon the whole, it must be said that he was an actor of the highest order, with few equals in our time. Mr. Harris was so sensible of his value that he passed over his ingratitude, and wrote,

in March, 1812, to invite him to return to England, and Covent Garden, where he would be received with cordial welcome. No doubt he would have been more popular than ever, for the town had, in his absence, felt his loss. But Death had set his seal upon him. He breathed his last on the 26th Sept. 1812, aged fifty-seven years and five months. The Americans had seen Mrs. Whitlock and Mrs. Merry, but they had never seen a first-rate tragic actor until they saw Cooke. Mr. Cooke was thrice married; first, to Miss Daniels, a singer, who ran away from him, and the marriage was declared null and void; it is said that he threatened to cut her tongue out,—perhaps it could rail as well as sing; secondly to a Miss Lambe, who separated from him; and thirdly, in America, to a lady who is said, by his biographer, to have tended him with kindness and affection. Such a partner, earlier in life, might have modified, if not altered his habits. As it was, his companions fostered his vices to prey upon him. In the receipt of a large income he was always poor, and he died almost a beggar.

Covent Garden Theatre opened for the season on the 10th Sept. 1810. Mr. Sheridan, having obtained an act of parliament to rebuild Drury Lane, which legalized the letting of the private boxes that might be set apart in that theatre, the Covent Garden proprietors

thought they might take advantage of that circumstance to retain a greater number of their private boxes than were "nominated in the bond." Some intimation of this intention was given on the concluding night of the last season, and, it being supposed that a kind of tacit assent had been obtained, in the hope of rendering the public placable they made some improvements in the avenues to the theatre, and raised the ceiling of the galleries during the recess. But as this proceeding was in direct violation of the famous contract concluded at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, it was evidently an unwise one, and proved unsuccessful. Again was Mr. Kemble hooted and hissed on that stage, where, in his proper capacity of an actor, he always experienced unbounded approbation. The contest was a short one; a second time the managers were compelled to yield; and peace was restored on the 21st. Mr. Brandon had long previously resumed his situation, after publishing a sensible address to the public, wherein he stated, "I have been thirty-nine years in the box-office of Covent-Garden Theatre, and I humbly appeal to its visitors, whether, during that long period, I have not served them with the utmost fidelity, zeal, and impartiality. It was with the deepest regret, independently of all personal considerations, that, in my anxiety to discharge what I conceived my duty, I found

I had given offence to any individual. I presume to hope that the feelings which urged my dismission from a situation that I had so long held have subsided, and that the public at large will accept my hearty contrition, as an atonement for every thing that has been deemed improper in my conduct."

Thus terminated the reign of O. P. His natural or violent death, in whichever way it may be viewed, was celebrated by Anthony Pasquin, who had returned from his exile, in a ditty supposed to be sung by Mr. Munden, of which the following is the only decent portion :—

THE GHOST OF O. P.

The moon was madd'ning half mankind,
  While desolation thinn'd life's tree,
When, 'mid night's damps at Kentish Town,
  I met the spectre of O. P.
"O. P.," said I, "why thus so wan?"
  Then, snivelling, thus quoth he to me—
"Go, mend your galligaskins, Joe,
  And think no more of poor O. P.

"May discord rage behind your scenes,
  And flash her brands at John and thee;
May all your wives have triple tongues,
  And then you'll think of poor O. P.
On Saturday may forfeits dire
  Vex Fawcett, Young, and Emery;
May Claremont cease to murder belles,
  That will be bliss for poor O. P.

"Rattles and catcalls now must sleep,
Placards be wrapped round bad bohea;
Bugles be scoff'd, and horns of tin,
For fate hath crippled poor O. P." &c. &c.

Jan. 7, 1811, Munden, having recovered from his fit of the gout, or rather debility (for it was upon this occasion he took the violent medicine, as before related, which enabled him to return to town, and immediately laid him up again), played Sir Francis Wronghead, Mr. Young playing Lord Townley with his usual excellence, and Miss Bolton the trifling part of Lady Grace with delicacy and unaffected modesty. Jan. 9, Othello was performed by Mr. Young, and Iago by Mr. C. Kemble, in the place of Mr. Cooke. Feb. 18, the Covent-Garden managers revived "Blue Beard," for the purpose of introducing Mr. Parker's stud of horses as one of the "*exhibitions of the drama worthy of a critical and enlightened* people"—(see their advertisement, Oct. 1809). Feb. 21, Mr. Kemble played Sir Giles Overreach, so long the property of Mr. Cooke; and Munden, Marrall. Mr. Kemble played Sir Giles with great discrimination, but his appearance and manners were too gentlemanly for the part. Overreach is a *parvenu*—an ill-bred, ferocious man: the coarse violence of Cooke was exactly suited to its delineation. Miss S. Booth played Margaret respectably, Kemble having taken great pains to instruct

Miss Booth in the character. March 6, Madame Catalani sang for the first time in a concert of sacred music, at that theatre which had so lately been shaken to its foundations on her account. When led into the orchestra by Mr. Braham, she was evidently much alarmed, fearing a similar outbreak, but was received with loud applause, a proper tribute to her unrivalled talents. April 2, Munden played Sir Anthony Absolute. 17th, "Dromio of Syracuse." 23rd, Mr. Holman produced his comedy of "The Gazette Extraordinary." Though that gentleman had never been engaged as an actor at Covent-Garden since his secession from the theatre shortly after the "rebellion" of the actors, as a dramatist he was always admitted. "The Gazette Extraordinary" was very successful, played, as it was, by Young, Jones, Barrymore, Fawcett, Munden, Murray, Mr. H. Johnston, Miss Bolton, Mrs. Davenport, and Miss Booth. "Blue Beard" not having answered the purpose of the house, the proprietors of Covent-Garden had recourse to another spectacle, by which they hoped to attract more crowded houses than the excellent company they possessed could draw to the "*finest theatre in Europe.*" They judged rightly that the horses could be seen, and did not require to be heard. This new pageant, denominated a grand romantic melo-drama, was produced under the direction of Mr. Far-

ley, and entitled "Timour the Tartar." Mrs. H. Johnston, who was a daughter of Mr. Parker, the equestrian (or of Mrs. Parker, by a former husband), was quite at home on horseback, and looked and played delightfully. In the debates in parliament (9th May), on the second reading of the Bill for a third theatre (which was lost), there was a great discrepancy between the statements made by Hon. Members respecting the accommodation afforded to the public. Mr. Marriatt noticed "the extreme inconvenience to which the public were put by having only one theatre," and said that, "If a gentleman applied for a box for himself and family, he was informed he could not get one for fourteen days; and thus taking it on chance for that time, if they wanted to laugh at a comedy, they were perhaps seated to cry at a tragedy; and, if they desired a tragedy, they might be treated with a comedy, or a melo-drama." Mr. Sheridan, on the contrary, affirmed that "it was erroneous to say there was only one theatre, when, in fact, there were two; and one of that very description which gentlemen required; where they could hear every thing, and see the varied expression of the actor's countenance; and where there was no room for cavalry to prance about; and yet that theatre was almost deserted, though there never was a better company collected together under a more able manager."

Mr. Sheridan likewise observed, that "Mr. Kemble would much rather, he was sure, act on his own two legs, than call in the aid of cavalry; but the fact was, that the taste of the town was more gratified by them; that taste being perverted by the depravity of manners, and the alteration in the mode of living, which prevented people of fashion from attending and taking the lead in the theatres as formerly." So the poor town was to be blamed, because it would only go to see, what it *could see*, and because Mr. Sheridan was about to build another huge theatre, and hoped, by dint of railing against the public taste, to shame audiences into filling it. This strain might become the adapter of "Pizarro," but not the author of "The School for Scandal."

The public were astounded by the information that an amateur of large fortune was performing in the provinces, who wore his own (real) diamonds, which were said to be immensely valuable. In process of time this star of the first magnitude came to astonish the natives of London.

Mr. Coates, for that was his name, distinguished himself by driving in a strange vehicle, and various other acts, bordering on insanity; but all that he did was outdone by his performance of Romeo. He played amid roars of laughter, and seemed to glory in it. To satisfy the encore of the audience he died

*twice,* and acquired the name of Romeo Coates. This was a fertile subject for the accurate mimicry of the late Mr. Matthews. Mr. Coates bore the "taking off" very good humouredly, stretching himself from the stage box, and heartily shaking Mr. Matthews by the hand. With equal good humour did he submit to a stupid hoax that was played upon him, by sending him a forged card of invitation to an entertainment at Carlton House. Mr. Coates, dressed for the occasion, sent in the card, and was politely informed by the Lord in waiting that it was a forgery. He quietly walked back to his carriage, and afforded no amusement to the hoaxer. This gentleman distinguished himself, during the Thiers' administration, by a wish for perpetual amity between France and England, expressed in the presence of the King of the French; to whose response, delivered in English, considerable political importance was attached at the time.

May 24, Munden continued to play his usual parts with little novelty, until the revival of Shakespeare's comedy, "All's well that ends well," in which he played Lafen. We are sorry now to record a severance of that connection which had subsisted so long between our actor and Covent Garden Theatre. So far back as 1803, Munden's dissatisfaction with Mr. Harris's new regulations, which he

shared in common with seven of his brethren, appears to have been aggravated by the endeavour to press upon him the part of Sir Simon Rochdale in Colman's comedy of "John Bull." This part we find, by a copy of a letter from Mr. Harris, senior, dated March 7, 1803, lying before us, he returned to that gentleman personally, it is said (we hope in anger only), "in the rudest language of defiance;" stating his determination never to perform a second character in any piece whatever. Mr. Harris's letter is so intemperately written that it would not be fair to publish it in the absence of Munden's (to which it is a reply, and of which no copy has been preserved) requesting that his engagement might be made void at the end of the season. This request Mr. Harris, in very strong language, refuses, and recapitulates various charges of misconduct, and even of insult towards the theatre that "fostered" him. We repeat that we are neither in a condition to affirm or deny any of these charges; but on the one expression quoted, we venture to say, that no man, or body of men, can foster a good actor. It is his talent alone that fosters him. Mr. Harris's liberality, which we have readily admitted, would not have been extended to Munden, had he not brought money to the treasury; nor would the public have tolerated him, had he not pleased them. If the pro-

prietors of Covent Garden Theatre had not engaged Mr. Munden, the Drury Lane or Haymarket proprietors would have done so ere long. An actor of reputation is never allowed to slumber in obscurity.

By Mr. Harris's letter it appears that our actor received, in 1803, £14 per week, and, by the subjoined documents, he received £17 in 1811: this was not a very large increase in the space of eight years, especially as he had brought much money to the theatre. Mrs. Siddons (far be it from us to hint any comparison) received £50 per night for a stipulated number of nights.

That Munden was right in refusing the indifferent part of Sir Simon Rochdale is perfectly evident. When he came to Covent Garden Theatre in 1790, and found Mr. Quick and Mr. Wilson in possession of the priority of parts, he acquiesced; as he did when, at a period later than that of which we are now writing, he joined the Drury Lane company, and found Mr. Dowton in a similar position. On the secession of the two first-mentioned eminent performers, he became the principal comic actor at Covent Garden (Mr. Fawcett was a later importation) and entitled to the choice of characters, which usage had rendered sacred, and which had been enforced, as we have seen, in a manner disagreeable to Munden, when he had been required to surren-

der the part of Silky, in the "Road to Ruin," after having studied it. Neither Mr. Quick, Mr. Wilson, nor Mr. Dowton, so placed, would have consented to play the part of Sir Simon Rochdale.

Good feeling seems to have been restored between the manager and the actor, by the following letter, which, though bearing no date, must, by its reference to the young Roscius, have been written in 1804-5.

Theatre, Sunday.

DEAR MUNDEN,

I hear you have a large addition sent you for the new comedy,—however I depend on your good nature and friendship that we shall not be disappointed of our play for Wednesday. Your benefit will be on Tuesday the 14th May—it is very late to be sure,—but the benefits are unavoidably deferred this year on account of the Young Roscius, and the unlucky delay of Mr. Colman's comedy; but I trust this will be of no injury to you or any body.

Ever truly yours,

T. HARRIS.

Joseph Munden, Esq.

The following correspondence will best explain the new grievances that arose. The draft of Munden's first letter is not to be found.

No. 1.

Treasury Office,

January 9, 1811.

The Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, having taken into consideration Mr. Munden's request of being allowed hi

salary from the commencement of the present season, to the time when he was able to join the company, and to attend to his theatrical duties — they find that it would establish a most dangerous precedent to grant Mr. Munden's request, as it would break through a long established regulation in the theatre; viz., "That no performer can receive any salary until they* had either acted, or given notice of their readiness to do so, when called upon."—In fact the interests of the proprietors have recently suffered most severely by the protracted illness of performers, too frequently occasioned, not by their professional exertions at Covent Garden Theatre (which they should always think themselves bound to remunerate), but brought on by their *irregularities* and *over exertions elsewhere*, which it would be very bad policy to encourage.

The present situation of the concerns of the Theatre precludes the probability of the proprietors indulging in any extraordinary act of liberality, for, without any reservation of emolument to themselves, they are compelled to divide among their numerous claimants the *whole receipts* of the theatre. The proprietors therefore can only express a hope that the *increased size of the new theatre and the raised prices* (which the proprietors have effected entirely at their own risk, and which Mr. Munden thought proper so loudly and unadvisedly to condemn, during the distressing contest of last year) may now enable him at his benefit, to retrieve the loss that he will sustain this season.

No. 2.

No date—probably July, 1811.

In the apprehension that, after a cool and dispassionate review of Mr. Munden's appeal for salary, during his confinement in the earlier part of this season, the managers of Covent Garden Theatre would, before its close, yield him some satis-

* So in the original letter.

faction, he has thus long abstained from further pressing upon their attention: but, having been disappointed in his expectation, he now begs to offer the following remarks on such his appeal, and their reply.

Mr. Munden's claim for salary *from the commencement of the current season* was founded on the following circumstances:—that, notwithstanding he was in a state of confirmed malady at that time (which the managers may assure themselves was not attributable to either of the causes alleged in their note, but to the mere visitation of Providence), he hastened from Liverpool to town, with no other view or inclination than to perform his theatrical duties;—his anxieties to effect which increased his complaint, and defeated the accomplishment of his wishes.

Mr. Munden is avowed by the managers to be proscribed their indulgence, only because his affliction originated *before he could join the company;*—but he is desirous to impress on their minds that he received numerous characters for study before he was capable of such a junction; and he apprehended himself *so employed*, as much in his professional duty, constructively, *as if he had given formal notice of his readiness to perform;*—besides which, it must be in Mr. Kemble's recollection, that he kindly dissuaded Mr. Munden in more instances than one from too early an attendance at the theatre. He therefore asks, and still confidently trusts to receive a more favourable answer from the managers than the one already communicated.

The advantages hinted at by the managers' note as likely to result to Mr. Munden *from the increased size of the new theatre, and the raised prices*, he assures them have not been realized; as his benefit, owing to the advanced season at which it was announced, proved more unproductive than it has been for a series of preceding years; and Mr. Munden conceives it hardly fair that the managers should advert to raised prices, when, for the chance of an advantage to result from them, he was made an additional charge of forty pounds.

His late detention in town he also feels to be an extreme evil, precluding, as it does, the power of making country engagements, which are ever most profitable, and the opportunity for which is yielded to some of his brother actors, but withheld from him ; though it was stipulated in a private agreement between Mr. Harris and himself that should any other actor be permitted to leave the theatre before the close of the theatrical season, Mr. Munden should enjoy the same rivilege.

On the whole, Mr. Munden's emoluments and advantages have been so reduced, during the current season, that the income derived from his town engagement has proved insufficient for the liberal * support of his family. He, therefore, should his appeal be conceived irregular, solicits that he may be relieved from his present articles, and possess the liberty to exercise his talent to better advantage.

No. 3.

The causes assigned by Mr. Munden for his request to quit the theatre are so frivolous, unfounded, and unreasonable, that the proprietors have no doubt that Mr. M. has some more profitable pursuit in view; they therefore do not hesitate to comply with his desire.

Mr. Munden's expectation of being paid for the length of time he was absent, being from the opening in September to the 15th Dec. before he set his foot in the theatre this season, is contrary to all justice, and to the unvarying rule of the theatre. Mr. M. must be aware of the great loss, and inconvenience sustained by the theatre, in consequence of his long absence, and that a new piece, as well as several attractive plays, were laid aside on that account.

---

* The copy of this letter is not in Munden's hand-writing ; assuredly, this phrase was not his ; his general style was simple and unostentatious.

Does Mr. Munden expect (at a time too when the proprietors are so much pressed by their creditors) that they should shut up their theatre in the midst of successful and profitable business, in order to give Mr. M. an opportunity of making a better engagement in the country? Has not Mr. M. received his salary at this theatre, although engaged and performing at the Haymarket Theatre?* Notwithstanding Mr. M. did not commence his acting this season until the 29th Dec. he was paid from the 15th Dec., a fortnight before he performed, and has cleared this season (including his benefit) between 7 and 800*l.*, a sum much greater than has come to the share of the principal proprietors; but Mr. M. appears to have no feeling for any one's family but his own. He says:—"*That his present emolument is not sufficient for the liberal support of his family, and desires to be relieved from his present articles, and to possess the liberty to exercise his talent to better advantage.*"

In reply, the proprietors acquaint Mr. Munden that they inclose him his articles cancelled, and as they shall not expect Mr. M.'s assistance the next season, that they have made their arrangements acordingly.

P.S. Mr. Munden has made an unaccountable mistake in regard to the charge of his benefit, the truth being that he has been charged no more this season, and the last, than he was in the old theatre, and ever since he entered into his last engagement, notwithstanding the late advance in the prices of admission to the boxes. It is true that some years ago the charge for benefits was 40*l.* less; but Mr. Munden may recollect that his salary was then much lower, and that when he first came to the theatre he had but 6*l.* per week, and that since, his salary has been gradually raised to 17*l.* per week.

---

* This could only have been from the 13th, when he made his appearance at the Haymarket, until the 23rd, when Covent Garden closed.

Yet Mr. Munden is still dissatisfied with the reward of his talent, and thinks it *insufficient "for the liberal support of his family."*

Covent Garden Theatre,
July 25th 1811.

Upon this correspondence (the gravamen of which was the sick clause*) we forbear making any remark, although, as Sir Roger de Coverley observes, "much might be said on both sides." From that time forth Munden never set his foot into Covent Garden Theatre, except for a benefit. He engaged, as he had done before, for the summer season at the Haymarket.

---

* See Mr. Smith's letter to the editor of "The Monthly Mirror."

## CHAPTER VII.

Munden at the Haymarket—The "Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh"—Lord Eldon's opinion of the Actors' Merits—Act of Parliament passed for rebuilding Drury Lane—Our Actor's great success in his provincial excursions—Introduction to Sir Walter Scott—Mrs. Siddons' retirement from the Stage—Extraordinary honours paid to her—Mr. Terry's appearance at the Haymarket—Opening of New Drury Lane Theatre under a sub-committee of management—The Rejected Addresses—The Drury Lane Company—Munden's engagement at Drury Lane—Bannister's mimicry, and its unfortunate result.

MUNDEN came out at the Haymarket (July 13th) in "Old Dornton." Harry Dornton, Mr. Elliston; Sulky, Mr. Grove; Silky, Mr. Barnes; Goldfinch, Mr. Jones; Milford, Mr. R. Jones; the Widow Warren, Mrs. Grove; Sophia, Mrs. Barnes. Harry Dornton was played by Elliston in his best manner. Mr. Jones' volatile spirits and lively manners were displayed to great advantage in Goldfinch; and Mrs. Barnes played Sophia with simplicity and animation. "The Road to Ruin" was repeated on the 17th; on the 18th Munden

played in "The School for Authors." The Lyceum, the rival house, boasted at this period of a company in which were Mr. Knight, Mr. Lovegrove, Mrs. Orger, and, above all, Miss Kelly, who was then winning her way towards that high rank in her profession which she afterwards attained. The Haymarket partners continued to disagree. Mr. Morris had objected to the engagement of Mr. Elliston, at a salary of 40*l.* per week, and two clear benefits. He published an appeal to the public, complaining that this engagement, as well as Messrs. Munden and Jones's, had been concluded without his knowledge. He refused to pay the salaries; but offered Mr. Elliston 20*l.* per week and one benefit; and Messrs. Munden and Jones "such salaries as they can reasonably be entitled to:" these offers were refused. Mr. Colman appealed to the Court of Chancery, and the difference being arranged, Messrs. Colman and Winston published the following advertisement on the 25th July.

"Messrs. Colman and Winston, most grateful for past patronage, and solicitous to deserve its continuance by every effort in their power, are happy in announcing to the public that they have surmounted the great difficulties opposed to them by their partner, and effected the return of Messrs. Elliston, Jones, and Munden; in consequence of which, this evening will be performed 'The Road to Ruin.'"

July 26th was produced a tragico-comico-

anglo-Germanico-hippo-dramatico romance, in two acts, called "The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh; or The Rovers of Weimar," which, it was announced, had been "long in preparation, and the public is respectfully informed that every effort has been strained to surpass nature!"

This piece was adapted, with alterations and additions, from a dramatic sketch entitled "The Rovers," written by Mr. Canning, and published several years previously, in the "Anti-Jacobin." Mr. Canning's object was to ridicule the prevailing taste for German Dramas, with their sickly sentiment, and undisguised immorality. Colman added some introductory matter, and introduced some smart hits at the quadruped performers at Covent Garden.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF THE QUADRUPEDS OF QUEDLINBURGH.

CHARACTERS OF A VEHICULAR DESCRIPTION, BUT ON FOOT.

Mr. Bartholomew Bathos, (*an English dramatist on the German model, and student in the veterinary college*) . . . . Mr. Elliston.
Manager of the Haymarket Theatre (*a very "poor gentleman"*) . . . . . Eyre.
Call-boy (*a go-between*) . . . . . Minton.

CHARACTERS IN THE ROMANCE.

Duke of Saxe Weimar, (*a sanguinary tyrant, with red hair, and an amorous complexion*) . Noble.

Rogero (*prisoner in the Abbey of Quedlinburgh, in love with Matilda Pottingen*) . Mr. Liston.
Casimere (*a Polish emigrant in Dombrowski's legion, married to Cecilia, and having several children by Matilda*) . . . Munden.
Beefington and Puddingfield* (*English noblemen exiled by the tyranny of King John, previously to the signature of Magna Charta*) . . by Mr. Shaw and Mr. Grove.
Doctor Pottingen (*L.L.D.*) . . . . Mr. Martin.
Waiter at Weimar (*a knight templar in disguise*) . Finn.
Monk with a firelock (*a military ecclesiastic*) . . Lewis.
Matilda Pottingen (*in love with Rogero, and mother to Casimere's children*) . . Mrs. Glover.
Cecilia Muckinfield (*a passenger in the dilly, and wife to Casimere*) . . . . Gibbs.
Dame Schüttenbruch (*widow and landlady of the inn at Weimar*) . . . . . Grove.

DUMBIES.

Neddy Crantz (*jackass to the wheel of the well in the Abbey of Quedlinburgh*) . by a new performer.
Female captive (*a corpulent virgin*) . . Miss Leserve.

Pantalowski and Britchinda, children of Matilda, by Casimere; Joachim, Jabal, and Amarantha, children of Matilda, by Rogero; children of Casimere and Cecilia, with their respective nurses; several children, fathers and mothers unknown. Officers, soldiers of the light and heavy horse, grenadiers, troubadours, monks, donkeys, &c. &c. &c.

*** Pedigrees of the horses, *when published*, will be distributed in the theatre.

The trio and chorus (*in a stunning whisper*) composed by Mr. Reeve, by Mr. Munden, by Mr. Payne, Mr. Shaw, &c.

**The following prologue was spoken by Mr. Elliston:—**

To lull the soul by spurious strokes of art,
To warp the genius, and mislead the heart;
To make mankind revere wives gone astray,*
Love pious sons who rob on the highway;†
For this the foreign muses trod our stage,
Commanding *German schools* to be the rage.
Hail to such schools! Oh, fine *false feeling*, hail!
Thou badst *non-natural nature* to prevail;
Through thee, *soft super-sentiment* arose,
Musk to the mind, like civet to the nose,
Till fainting taste (as invalids do wrong)
Snuff'd the sick perfume, and grew weakly strong.
Dear Johnny Bull! you boast much resolution,
With, thanks to Heaven! a glorious Constitution:
Your taste, recovered half from foreign quacks,
Takes airings, now, on English horses' backs;
While every modern bard may raise his name,
If not on *lasting praise*, on *stable fame*.
Think that to Germans you have given no check,
Think how each actor hors'd has risk'd his neck;
You've shown them favour: Oh, then, once more show it
To this night's *Anglo-German, Horse Play* Poet!‡

**The first act went off exceedingly well. A scene, wherein Matilda Pottingen and Cecilia Muckenfield meet, called forth loud bursts of applause.**

---

* Vide "The Stranger." † "Lover's Vows."

‡ The first twelve lines of this excellent parody on Pope's prologue to Cato bear so close a resemblance to "New Morality," that I conceived them to be the composition of Mr. Canning, until a reference to "The Anti-Jacobin" satisfied me I was mistaken. Colman's Muse seldom soars so high.

SCENE BETWEEN MATILDA AND CECILIA.

From

*"The Rovers; or, The Double Arrangement."*

*Scene represents a room at an inn, at Weimar. On one side of the stage the bar-room, with jellies, lemons in nets, syllabubs, and part of a cold roast fowl, &c.; on the opposite side, a window looking into the street, through which persons (inhabitants of Weimar) are seen passing to and fro in apparent agitation. Matilda appears in a great-coat and riding habit, seated at the corner of a dinner table, which is covered with a clean huckaback cloth: plates and napkins, with buck's-horn handled knives and forks, are laid on as if for four persons.*

*Matilda.*—Is it possible that I can have dinner sooner?

*Landlady.*—Madam, the Brunswick post-waggon has not yet come in; and the ordinary is never before two o'clock.

*Matilda (with a look of disappointment, but immediately recomposing herself).*—Well, then, I must have patience.—(*Exit Landlady.*)—Oh, Casimere! How often have the thoughts of thee served to amuse these moments of expectation! What a difference, alas! Dinner—it is taken away as soon as over, and we regret it not! It returns again with the return of appetite. The beef of to-morrow will succeed to the mutton of to-day, as the mutton of to-day succeeded to the veal of yesterday. But when once the heart has been occupied by a beloved object, in vain would we attempt to supply the charm by another. How easily are our desires transferred from one dish to another! Love only—dear, delusive love—restrains our wandering appetites, and confines them to a particular gratification!

(*Post-horn blows. Re-enter Landlady.*)

*Landlady.*—Madam, the post-waggon is just come in, with only a single gentlewoman.

*Matilda.*—Then show her up, and let us have dinner in-

stantly—(*Landlady going*) ;—and remember—(*after a moment's hesitation, and with great earnestness*)—remember the toasted cheese.—(*Exit Landlady.*)

(*Cecilia enters, in a brown riding dress, as if just alighted from the post-waggon.*)

*Matilda.*—Madam, you seem to have had an unpleasant journey, if I may judge from the dust on your riding habit.

*Cecilia.*—The way was dusty, madam, but the weather was delightful. It recalled to me those blissful moments when the rays of desire first vibrated through my soul.

*Matilda* (*aside.*)—Thank Heaven ! I have at last found a heart which is in unison with my own.—(*To Cecilia.*)—Yes ; I understand you. The first pulsation of sentiment : the silver tones upon the yet unsounded harp.

*Cecilia.*—The dawn of life—when this blossom—(*putting her hand to her heart*)—first expanded its petals to the penetrating dart of Love !

*Matilda.*—Yes, the time—the golden time—when the first beams of the morning meet and embrace one another ! The blooming blue upon the yet unplucked plumb ?

*Cecilia.*—Your countenance grows animated, my dear madam.

*Matilda.*—And yours, too, is glowing with illumination.

*Cecilia.*—I had long been looking for a congenial spirit ! My heart was withered, but the beams of yours have rekindled it.

*Matilda.*—A sudden thought strikes me. Let us swear an eternal friendship.

*Cecilia.*—Let us agree to live together.

*Matilda.*—Willingly.—(*With rapidity and earnestness.*)

*Cecilia.*—Let us embrace.—(*They embrace.*)

*Matilda.*—Yes ; I too have lov'd ! You, too, like me, have been forsaken !—(*Doubtingly, and as if with a desire to be informed.*)

*Cecilia.*—Too true !

*Both.*—Ah, these men! These men!

*Landlady enters, and places a leg of mutton on the table, with sour krout and pruin sauce; then a small dish of black puddings. Cecilia and Matilda appear to take no notice of her.*

*Matilda.*—Oh, Casimere!

*Cecilia.*—Casimere! That name! Oh, my heart—how it is distracted with anxiety!

*Matilda.*—Heavens! Madam, you turn pale.

*Cecilia.*—Nothing—a slight megrim. With your leave, I will retire.

*Matilda.*—I will attend you.—(*Exeunt Matilda and Cecilia.*)

Casimere arrives soon after, and falls in first with Matilda, and then with Cecilia. Successive *éclaircissemens* take place, and an arrangement is finally made, by which the two ladies are to live jointly with Casimere. But, tired at last of this "double arrangement," Casimere resolves to attempt Rogero's release, and to make over Matilda to him as the price of his rescue.

The following humorous song was written by Mr. Canning; and Liston (the captive Rogero), holding a tattered handkerchief to his eyes, sang it in so ludicrous a manner, that the audience were convulsed with laughter:—

Whene'er with haggard eyes I view
This dungeon that I'm rotting in,
I think of those companions true
Who studied with me at the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen.

Weeps, and pulls out a blue 'kerchief, with which he wipes his eyes; gazing tenderly at it, he proceeds—

Sweet 'kerchief, check'd with heav'nly blue,
Which once my love sat knotting in!
Alas! Matilda *then* was true!
At least I thought so at the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen.

(At the repetition of this line Rogero clanks the chains in cadence.)

Barbs! barbs! alas! how swift you flew,
Her neat post-waggon trotting in!
Ye bore Matilda from my view.
Forlorn I languish'd at the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen.

This faded form! this pallid hue!
This blood my veins is clotting in.
My years are many—they were few
When first I entered at the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen.

There first for thee my passion grew,
Sweet! sweet Matilda Pottingen!
Thou was't the daughter of my tu—
—tor, law professor at the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen.

Sun, moon, and thou, vain world, adieu,
That kings and priests are plotting in:
Here doom'd to starve on water-gru—
—el, never shall I see the U—
—niversity of Gottingen—
—niversity of Gottingen!

The latter part of this romance was less successful. The force of the satire was not always felt by a mixed audience. That scene in "Pizarro," in which Rolla rescues Alonzo from prison, was ridiculed in a manner too plain to be misunderstood. Casimere (Munden) releases Rogero (Liston), by getting into the prison in the disguise of an apothecary, and giving the sentinel (a monk with a firelock) two seven shilling pieces. The idea was instantly taken, and loudly applauded. The romance concluded with a grand battle, in which the last scene of "Timour the Tartar" was imitated and burlesqued in the first style of extravagance. Basket horses were seen on the ramparts of a castle, and prancing about in all directions. A battering-ram was introduced, as in Timour; and with similar effect.

"The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh" was a very humorous effort, and had a successful run.

The Haymarket proprietors continued to play "The Road to Ruin," with "A Cure for the Heart Ache," "She Stoops to Conquer," "The School for Scandal," "The Provoked Husband," "Speed the Plough," "The Birthday," "The Poor Gentleman," &c.; comedies in which Munden filled a principal part, and others in which Jones excelled. They performed also both comedy and tragedy, in order

to display the varied talents of Elliston to advantage. Mr. Holman and his daughter were added to the company, and made a successful *début* (22nd August) in "Venice Preserved;" Jaffier, Mr. Holman; Pierre, Mr. Elliston; Belvidera, Miss Holman. The season was so profitable, that the proprietors procured an extension of their annual license to five months, being one month longer than the original grant; and, during the extended period, admitted *half price*, raising the first price of the boxes to six shillings, without a murmur on the part of the public. The Lyceum also opened, with the Drury Lane company, as a winter theatre. On the 23rd Sept. was performed at the Haymarket, a new farce, called "Darkness Visible," by Theodore Hook; principal characters by Elliston, Jones, Munden, and Russell. Oct. 14th, Munden took for his benefit, "A Bold Stroke for a Husband," with the "Agreeable Surprise," and "Bombastes Furioso." The Haymarket Theatre closed its season on the 15th October.

In the course of this season, Mr. Munden felt himself called upon to exercise that discretion, with regard to the acceptance of a part, for which he had formerly contended, and declined acting in a piece, written by the manager. It does not appear, by the following letter, that Mr. Colman, either as a pro-

prietor of the Haymarket Theatre, or as Mr. Colman, the author of this piece, as well as the comedy of "John Bull," took umbrage at the exercise of such a discretion:—

"25th Sept. 1811.

"My dear Munden,

"I scarcely expected you to accept the part, which the *business* of the Melodrama would not afford me an opportunity of making better. I should not have offered it to you, but in consequence of the inclination you expressed to give the piece a helping hand.

"We must do without your powerful aid, which I do not in the least wonder at your withholding, on the present occasion.

"I know you have the interests of the house at heart, and will do all that *reason* can ask; to press Baptista upon your acceptance would be very *un*reasonable.

"Most truly yours,

"G. Colman.

"Joseph Munden, Esq."

In the case of Morris v. Colman, &c., regarding the three engagements before referred to, the Lord Chancellor (Lord Eldon) expressed himself in language so extraordinary, and with such total ignorance of the nature of theatrical engagements, that we may be excused for quoting it:—

"Court of Chancery, July 20th.

The Lord Chancellor observed,—"that if the litigation on the east and west side of the Haymarket continued, in justice to the other suitors, a branch of the Court of Chancery

ought to be placed in the Haymarket." He then took a review of the case, and said, "it was not to be borne that he should be made the manager of opera-houses, theatres, circuses, and puppet-shows. He had not a knowledge of the merit of the different performers; but, if such salaries were given to them, it was a better profession than the bar. He had once said, that he would not give five shillings to hear Catalani sing all the year round; and suppose he was to decide, he might think that a singer ought to have five shillings, instead of 6000*l.* a year; he would, however, never make use of that expression again, for, from the first time he did, he never dare venture into a place of fashionable amusement. He would not grant either motions (one was for an injunction to prevent Colman and Winston from engaging performers without the consent of the plaintiff; and the counter-motion, for an order to oblige the plaintiff, as treasurer, to pay the performers), they ought to go by their agreement. Mr. Morris ought to be consulted on the engagements, and where he was not, he ought to give notice to the performers that they were not legally engaged, in which case an action would not lay against him; but if consulted, and Mr. Colman and the other proprietor agreed, he must acquiesce, and pay the salary of the person so engaged."

It was stated in the course of these proceed-

ings, that Messrs. Munden and Jones were originally engaged for one month at 100*l.* each. Mr. Colman refused to bring forward his new piece without them and Elliston, and, then, Mr. Morris gave a conditional consent. The act of Parliament for rebuilding Drury Lane having passed, and a committee being appointed, a list of distinguished names was published, commencing with that of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and the other princes of the blood royal, as patrons, and a subscription was raised to defray the undertaking. Mr. Whitbread, one of the committee, with infinite labour, made terms with the various creditors of the old theatre (whose interests were very complicated, and whose claims now appeared to be 436,971*l.*), by which they agreed to receive 25 per cent in full of all demands. The patent was purchased for a sum stated differently at from 40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.*, of which Mr. Sheridan received a moiety, Mr. Thomas Sheridan one fourth, and Mrs. Richardson one fourth, they (the old proprietors) having no concern with the new theatre. The Duke of Bedford relinquished all claim to his ground rent, which is said to have amounted to 12,000*l.* In a similar noble spirit, the Duke of Northumberland, on the day that the first stone of Covent Garden Theatre was laid, sent to Mr. John Kemble his bond for 10,000*l.*, borrowed of his Grace, cancelled, and told him to make a bon-

fire of it. These were princely acts. Of three plans submitted to the committee, that of Mr. Benjamin Wyatt was accepted; and Mr. Rowles being appointed builder, bound himself under a large penalty to complete the edifice on or before Oct. 1, 1812. The trowel and the hammer resounded in Vinegar-yard; and the Honourable Douglas Kinnaird stated, with reference to the undertaking, at a general meeting of the subscribers, that, "as a banker, he would give his advice to any man in its favour, even as an object of speculation." It is strange that, after the statement of the Covent Garden proprietors, and their published report, such sanguine expectations could have been formed. The shareholders have now the painful experience of their nullity.

After the close of the Haymarket Theatre, Munden proceeded to fulfil several country engagements, principally at Shrewsbury, Chester, and Manchester. At Chester all ranks flocked to his benefit, induced by old recollections and his present celebrity. His great success is alluded to in the following letter from Mr. Colman:—

Dec. 30, 1811.

4, Melina-place, Westminster Road.

Many thanks, my dear Munden, for your letter. It gives me a sincere pleasure to hear of your late successes: "So should desert in arms be crown'd!"

I shall be heartily glad to see you, as you propose, on

Thursday next, at four o'clock; and I will order the seas and rivers to be thaw'd, during this hard frost, that we may not be disappointed of a bit of fish. I have much to consult you upon.

Ever truly yours,

Joseph Munden, Esq. G. Colman.

Munden did not long remain in town. He proceeded again into the country to reap the golden harvest, which, at this season of the year, he had few rival "stars" to share with. He seems to have travelled from place to place with great celerity; to have laboured hard; and to have been then intent on acquiring that competency, which rendered him independent of the frowns of managers, and enabled him to retire from the profession when he pleased. Previously to his secession from Covent Garden Theatre, it does not appear that he had saved much money; the frequent orders in his letters, of the present date, for investments in the funds, manifest that he was now rapidly accumulating it; and an evident tendency to economy appears in all his letters to his wife. The subjoined are extracts from these letters. He played at Newcastle; next at Rochdale, in Feb. 1812, eight successive nights, "greatly received in public as well as in private; my benefit greater by ten pounds than ever known —134*l.* 10*s.*;" at Glasgow; and at Edinburgh in March. From Edinburgh he writes: (29th March) "I have been very unfortunate here in the weather; from the first moment I came

into the place to this hour, nothing but violent frost and snow; the roads impassable. This place would have been a great card to me, but the weather, and Mrs. Siddons' great drain, have much injured the receipts of the theatre. I am a very great favourite, and every box taken for my benefit on Wednesday next. I return for one night to Glasgow to perform for a charity, on Saturday next; and then for four nights to Greenock. I shall not be in London until the last moment before the Haymarket opens; as I am out, I'll get all I can." April 16th, "I arrived here (Lancaster) on Monday, and shall leave for Preston on Tuesday next. The business here *very good* for Lancaster. After Preston, I believe I shall either be at Derby, or Worcester, but have not yet settled; and I perform at Birmingham on the 4th May,—shall stay there until the Monday following, and then for home, which I shall be glad of, for I have *fagg'd very hard.*"

While Munden was in Edinburgh, Mr. James Ballantyne was desirous of making him acquainted with Walter Scott, as he had previously introduced the late Mr. Matthews. Scott's note is subjoined:—

My dear James,

I am on duty at the Register Office about the hour you mention; but I will be at home at *three* o'clock, and happy to see Mr. Munden.

Yours truly, W. Scott.

Mr. Ballantyne.

The great poet and novelist entertained Munden with his accustomed hospitality. For some time he conversed upon indifferent subjects; but at length referring to the stage, he said, "Mr. Munden, there was one performance of yours which astonished me more than most which I have witnessed." "Indeed," replied his guest, who expected one of those compliments which are paid, as a matter of course, to public men; "pray, which was that, Mr. Scott?" Munden expected to be complimented upon the part of Old Dornton, Sir Robert Bramble or Sir Peter Teazle, upon which the town had showered down its applause; he was mistaken. "I cannot recollect the name of it," said Scott; "it was a piece of flimsy materials, and the part was nothing in itself,—I think an old general who was blind; and what struck me was, how you could produce such an effect, debarred the use of the most powerful feature of expression which the art demands." Mr. Munden felt the critical acumen that dictated this remark, and always related the circumstance with pride and pleasure.

We depart from our subject to record the greatest loss that the stage had sustained for the last half century—the retirement of Mrs. Siddons. The particulars of Mrs. Siddons's splendid career may be found in her Life, by Mr. Boaden, and the Memoir, by Mr. Thomas

Campbell, who was honoured by her friendship, and had access to her private memoranda. This distinguished actress played for the last time, in her professional capacity, on the 29th Jan., 1812; though she afterwards performed at intervals—for the Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden Funds—for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kemble's benefits, and by command of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte. The part she selected to take her leave of the public in was Lady Macbeth; and it is curious to remark how widely her theoretical conception of the character, as described in the Memoranda published by Mr. Campbell, differed from its practical exemplification. If Lady Macbeth, as Mrs. Siddons conceives, should be "fair, feminine, nay, perhaps, even fragile," the general voice hailed as its greatest representative one who possessed dark and strongly marked features, a masculine form, and commanding action. It is needless to say that Mrs. Siddons was greeted on her departure by every tribute of admiration that the public or the nation could bestow. The audience would not suffer the play to proceed after she quitted the stage. The King and Queen commanded Mrs. Siddons to read to them. The bar of England had before presented an address to her by the hands of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Erskine; Sir Joshua Reynolds had, with delicate flattery, inscribed his name on

the hem of her garment, as the Tragic Muse; the masters of eloquence—Johnson, Burke, Windham, Fox, Sheridan, and Erskine—had listened with deep attention to her unrivalled recitations; and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge now solicited her to visit them, that they might hear the English language pronounced in its utmost perfection. Her private accommodation was consulted by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who directed that the plan of the Regent's Park should be altered, in order that the view from her residence, in Upper Baker-street, might not be intercepted. Mrs. Siddons concluded her public life by a series of readings from Shakespeare, at the Argyle Rooms; at which this wonderful woman, then at an advanced age, and wearing spectacles, read from a volume, placed on a desk, in such an impressive manner, as thrilled her hearers with delight. Where she chiefly astonished was in parts usually filled by inferior actors. The late Mr. Knight said that she gave to the little part of Rosse, in "Macbeth," an effect of which he hardly thought it capable; and Mr. Kean expressed his deep regret that he had not been present.

Munden opened at the Haymarket (May 15) in "The Birth-Day." On the 18th, he played Hardcastle to Matthews's Tony Lumpkin. May 20th, Mr. Terry, from Edinburgh, made

his first appearance in Lord Ogleby. This gentleman was in great habits of intimacy with Sir Walter Scott, to whom his aptness in sketching designs for Abbotsford, then in progress of erection, had introduced him. Terry* had acquired this talent in his early studies under an architect. As an actor, he was respectable, but not great: he attempted too much. In this season, at the Haymarket, he played the dissimilar characters of Shylock, Job Thornberry, Sir Anthony Absolute, Don Cæsar in "A Bold Stroke for a Husband," Barford in "Who Wants a Guinea," &c. Munden was unable to attend from illness for nearly a month; and, during that time, Matthews played his parts. July 6th, he again appeared in "The Road to Ruin," and played, successively, Peachum, Sir Luke Tremor (Such Things Are,) Perriwinkle, (Bold Stroke for a Wife,) Old Mirabel, (The Deaf Lover,) Caustic, (The Way to Get Married,) Sir Marmaduke, (Doldrum,) Torrent, Bonus, Cockletop, and Sir Christopher Curry, (Inkle and Yarico.) He passed the greater part of the next year, with the exception of

* Mr. Terry wrote the opera of "Guy Mannering," from Scott's novel; and Hazlitt's is no slight praise, when he states, and correctly too, that few unacquainted with the novel could detect the difference between the matter introduced by Terry, and the composition of the original author.

occasional country engagements, in retirement at his pretty villa at Kentish Town. This, the third house he had inhabited in that village, had been erected from a design by one of the Brothers—Adam, who constructed the pile of buildings in the Strand,—the Adelphi, so termed from their conjoint efforts. The villa was a very neat elevation, but has been spoiled by its present possessor, who has added another building to it, totally at variance with the original design. Munden having caught that ready infection—a fondness for dabbling in bricks and mortar—laid out a great deal of money in building stabling and out-houses, and in decorating and improving the grounds; wherein he was assisted by his only man-servant, who, like Scrub and Dozey, filled various capacities, being an occasional butler and footman, "a gardener all day, and a watchman all night." He was an eccentric being, and how he got his sleep no one knew; but in waiting at table, if he heard anything stated from which he dissented, he would, from his place behind his master's chair, not only contradict him, but his guests also. Munden, who had a fondness for oddities, rather encouraged than repressed this freedom, and winked at his visitors to take no notice. Thus passed the time away, until he joined the Drury-Lane Company.

The new Drury-Lane Theatre opened, Oct.

10, 1812, under a sub-committee of management, with an address, written by Lord Byron, —nearly the worst production of his pen; the committee having previously, in order to encourage poetical talent, advertised, like contractors, for an address, offering a premium for the best. It appears that all were bad, though one of them was sent anonymously by Mr. Whitbread, who was seized with the vain ambition of aspiring to poetical honours. The competitors were very wroth, and one of them insisted on reading his address from the boxes. This ludicrous commencement gave rise to the celebrated parody of "The Rejected Addresses." The opening play was "Hamlet"—Hamlet, Elliston; Ghost, Raymond; King, Powell; Laertes, Wallack; Horatio, Holland; Polonius, Dowton; Osrick, R. Palmer; Grave-diggers, Wewitzer and Peuley; Queen, Mrs. Brereton; Ophelia, Miss Kelly: with, "The Devil to Pay"—Jobson, Dowton; Nell, Miss Mellon. It will be seen, from the cast of "Hamlet," that Drury-Lane was weak in tragedy, the only eminent tragic performer being Miss Smith (now Mrs. Bartley).

To make amends, however, it was rich in comedy, possessing Elliston, Dowton, Bannister, Emery, Knight, Lovegrove, Wrench, &c.; and particularly in the female department, which numbered Miss Duncan, Mrs. Edwin, Miss Kelly, Miss Mellon, Mrs. Glover,

Mrs. Orger, Mrs. Sparks, and Mrs. Harlowe.

The sub-committee added to their tragic list Mr. Rae, a respectable actor, and a Mr. Sowerby, who was not successful. They also brought from the shelf, "Remorse," a tragedy by Coleridge, which had been rejected by Sheridan, with a parody on one line—

"Drip, drip, a ceaseless sound of water-drops,"

which Sheridan rendered by—

"Drip, drip—it is nothing but *dripping*."

"Remorse" had some poetical passages, but was written in an inflated style, and had few dramatic capabilities. The committee, placing their strength in comedy, resolved to engage Munden.

Previously to joining the Drury-Lane Company, Munden invited some of his future associates to dine with him at his residence at Kentish Town. His guests were Mr. Dowton, Mr. Bannister, Mr. Lovegrove, and Mr. Knight. Before the ladies quitted the table, the host whispered to Bannister, "Jack, I wish you would play off some of your tricks to please the women." Mr. Bannister, with great good humour, complied. He imitated animate and inanimate objects; amongst the rest, water falling from a height in various gradations, until it fell "like a pebble in Carisbrook Well." He then took higher

ground. He supposed a father on his death-bed, about to alter his will, to disinherit a disobedient son. He wrapped a napkin round his head and underneath his chin—assumed the ghastly stare, the glazed eye, the pallid countenance, and the clammy lips of fast-approaching dissolution. Those who recollect Mrs. Siddons in the last scene of Queen Catherine, hardly beheld a truer delineation. The dying man is raised on his supposititious bed—grasps the pen with forced determination—signs the will—and falls lifeless on his pillow. The company broke into a burst of admiration, but on one present it had a serious effect. Mr. Lovegrove had been married to Miss Weippert, daughter of the celebrated harp player. A short time previous to this meeting, Mrs. Lovegrove died of the effects of a cold, brought on by the prevailing fashion of thin clothing. Mr. Lovegrove, who was tenderly attached to his wife, was so affected by the truth of Bannister's personification, which brought to his recollection his recent bereavement, that he fainted; and the imitations were brought to an abrupt conclusion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Munden's first appearance at Drury Lane: his successive performances—Dearth of Tragic genius—Mr. Kean engaged at Drury Lane: his début in Shylock—Hesitation of the critics—His triumphant success in Richard—Comedy for a while unfashionable—Sub-committee of Drury Lane Theatre—Lord Byron, &c.—The three *active* members, Mr. Lambe, Mr. Kinnaird, and Mr. Peter Moore—Finnerty's epigram on the latter gentleman—Munden and Mrs. Garrick—Mrs. Jordan quits the stage: her misfortunes—Miss O'Neil engaged at Covent Garden: installed as the successor of Mrs. Siddons—"Town and Country" played at Drury Lane with great effect—Dibdin's "Past Ten o'Clock"—Munden's last great part of Dozey—Retirement of Mr. Bannister: remarks on his excellence—Criticism of Mr. Leigh Hunt on Munden's acting—"The Magpie"—"The Merchant of Bruges"—Anecdotes of Lord Byron and Sheridan.

THE *Times* newspaper (Oct. 5, 1813) thus records Munden's first appearance on the boards of Drury:—"This theatre has ensured to itself a powerful attraction in recalling to the stage the rich and well-defined humour of Munden. He was received last night with that distinguished applause which a man, so deservedly a favourite, might reasonably expect from a public seldom capricious in its amusements; and he played his old part of

Sir Abel Handy with undiminished effect." The other characters were filled by Pope, as Sir Philip Blandford; De Camp, Bob Handy (Wrench played this part on the next performance of the comedy); Dowton, Farmer Ashfield; Rae, Henry; Mrs. Edwin, Miss Blandford; Mrs. Sparks, Dame Ashfield. Munden's favourite plays were got up in succession. Oct. 6, "A Cure for the Heartache." 19th, "Way to Get Married." 21st, "School for Authors." 25th, "Bold Stroke for a Wife"—Bannister, Colonel Feignwell; Munden, Perriwinkle. 28th, "Duenna"—Isaac, Dowton; Don Jerome, Munden: and "The Citizen"—Old Philpot, Munden; Young Philpot, Bannister. 30th, a new comedy, by Mr. Horace Smith, entitled "First Impressions," in which Munden played Sir Thomas Trapwell. This piece had not a long run, but the *Morning Post* says—"Munden, Elliston, Mrs. Glover, and Mrs. Edwin, were unusually successful." Nov. 5, "Modern Antiques"—Cockletop, Munden; Joey, Knight. 10th, "Turnpike Gate." 15th, "Two Strings to Your Bow." 22nd, a new musical farce, by T. Dibdin, called "Is He Alive:" principal characters by Munden, Knight, and Wrench.

In this month Mr. Conway (it was, we believe, an adopted name) appeared at Covent-Garden, as Alexander the Great. The selection of the part was a judicious one; and, if

ever man possessed the requisites of form and face to fill it, Conway did. He had long enjoyed a great provincial reputation. Mr. Austin, who saw him play at Chester, said it was the best first appearance he had ever seen in his life. But, with a stature beyond the ordinary height, fine form, expressive features, and a voice powerful and not unpleasing, Conway marred all by affectation. He trod the stage as if he were walking on stilts, and raised and lowered his voice in an abrupt and disagreeable manner. When he entered on the scene in triumph, as Alexander, the *coup d'œil* was magnificent. "Pity," said somebody, "that the thing was made to speak." He played some parts, however,—Jaffier, especially,—far above the ordinary level; but the town took a dislike to him; the newspapers were severe; he had only the ladies in his favour. Conway at last lost his engagement at Covent-Garden; and, as he was too tall to play second to the new prodigy at Drury-Lane, necessity drove him to accept the humble situation of prompter, at the Haymarket. True it was, that Pope, who had played Othello and Lord Townley against John Kemble, and Dibdin, who had been a manager, did the same. Poor Conway! he attributed all his failure to the critics. "I know," said he, "I am not a great actor, but I cannot be so bad as they represent." Disappointment preyed upon his

spirits, and his mind took a serious turn. He embarked for America; but during the voyage, in a momentary aberration of reason, leaped overboard, and was drowned. Another account, we hope the true one, says he played in America, and died there.

A spectator, at this time, marvelling at this constant failure of every fresh attempt to possess the tragic chair, might well have said—

"Lo! the dull *stars* roll round and reappear!"

But two great luminaries were on the verge of the dramatic horizon. The first that burst upon the public sight was Edmund Kean! Mr. Kean (announced in the bills, "From the Exeter Theatre") made his appearance at Drury-Lane, as Shylock, Jan. 26, 1814. He was very favourably received by the public; but the critics seemed to pause before they ventured upon a decided opinion on his acting. The *Morning Post* spoke of him handsomely, but not enthusiastically. The writer in the *Times* candidly avowed that the many previous unsuccessful first appearances had rendered them at first sceptical as to the success of the new actor. It was not until he played Richard that the general voice pronounced him a phenomenon. Feb. 1, Mr. Kean repeated the character of Shylock. On this night the writer sat in the dress circle, near the stage, next to the late Mr. Perry, proprietor of the

*Morning Chronicle*, and an excellent judge of dramatic performances. Mr. Perry quickly discerned Kean's original talent, applauded vehemently, and penned himself some strong articles in his favour. Munden, when his son reached Kentish Town, after the performance, inquired what he thought of the new actor (he had not himself seen him), and heard, with a smile, that Mr. Kean would be the founder of a new school of tragic acting. "When you have seen as many stars rise and set as I have," said the practised comedian, "you will not so hastily pronounce an opinion." Nothing convinced, with the obstinacy of youth the son worshipped at the new shrine.

On another night of Kean's performance, he was in the manager's (Raymond) box, with Mr. Pope, Mr. Kelly, and Mrs. Billington. After the play, Pope retired, but returned in a few minutes, with a slight young man, attired in a great coat lined and cuffed with fur. He stepped carelessly into the box, and Pope introduced him to Mrs. Billington as—Mr. Kean. Mrs. Billington paid him many compliments "in good set phrase," and the youth, at the back of the box, strained his eyes to observe the object of his idolatry. Mr. Kean's admirer attended at the pit door from half-past four o'clock to six, wedged in by the multitude that filled Vinegar Yard on every fresh performance, and almost suffocated by

heat. With the preconceived notion that Mr. Kean's figure was unsuited for Othello, he stayed away from the theatre the first night that Kean performed the character, forgetting that

> "Before true merit all objections fly,
> Pritchard 's genteel, and Garrick 's six feet high."

But he attended the performance of Iago, and was equally occupied in observing the "smiling devil" in Kean's eye, and in watching the observant, and ever changing countenance of the author of Childe Harolde, who sat in the orchestra before him. All criticism on Kean's performances is superfluous here, as the reader will find them ably described in the pages of his accomplished biographer,—Barry Cornwall. Munden, at a subsequent period, paid a willing tribute to Kean's extraordinary excellence.

Happy was it for the proprietors of Drury Lane that this God's send fell in their way; for, notwithstanding the abundance of comic talent which Drury Lane possessed, the season had hitherto been an unprofitable one, as Mr. Whitbread stated at their next annual meeting, remarking: "It is to him (Mr. Kean) that, after 139 nights of continued loss and disappointment, the subscribers are indebted for the success of the season."

Yet, a few nights after Mr. Kean's first appearance, we find "Wild Oats" played with

such a cast as the following; better, perhaps, than when it was originally represented. Rover, Elliston; Sir George Thunder, Dowton; Harry Thunder, Wallack; Ephraim Smooth, Munden; John Dory, Bannister; Sim, Knight; Lady Amaranth, Mrs. Glover; Jane, Mrs. Orger. It is useless to speculate on the causes which induced the public to abstain from frequenting a theatre which contained such talent. Something may be attributed to the want of novelty; but the main spring of all the ill-success will be found in the extracts from the speech of Mr. Warren (counsel for the petitioners for a third theatre) which we have heretofore quoted. The new theatre which Mr. Kinnaird "as a banker," had so recently recommended as a safe investment, would, but for the discovery of Mr. Kean by Doctor Drury, have closed its doors before the conclusion of the season.

The surprising success of Mr. Kean rendered the green-room of Drury Lane a fashionable place of resort. Among the frequent visitors were the Earl of Essex, Lord Byron, Lord Holland, Lord Kinnaird, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, the Hon. George Lambe, Mr. Peter Moore, Mr. Calcraft, Monk Lewis, &c. The room was usually thronged, and the spectacle was rendered more attractive by the performers in character, who, as they descended from their dressing rooms, advanced

towards the long pier-glass at the end, examining the effect of their costume, making a grotesque or frowning face, and muttering some particular phrase, in which they judged a point could be made. During the performance, Lord Byron sat in his box, (the lower one on the stage, at the right hand) and raising the blind, drank his Madeira and cracked his walnuts. He interfered little in the concerns of the theatre, leaving the management to Mr. Lambe, Mr. Kinnaird and Mr. Peter Moore, who were very active, and did as much harm as amateur managers generally do. Mr. Kinnaird introduced upon the stage, as a singer, a lady, who resided under his protection, and who had been known in *another* part of the theatre, where she was termed from her waddling gait—the duck. Tom Dibdin, their stage manager, perpetrated a pun, upon this, in the enquiry: "What is a duck?—*un canard!*" It should be observed that Mr. Kean was not fond of mixing in this noble assemblage. He disliked their criticisms, and still more their flattery; and after playing a new part, when he dreaded the infliction of both, he would wrap his great coat around him, and rapidly make his escape from the house, leaving them disappointed of his presence to listen to their congratulations.

The three *active* members of the committee duly attended at the rehearsals. Mr. George

Lambe, a polite gentleman, arranged with the sub-managers the general business of the theatre:— Mr. Kinnaird ransacked the works of the old dramatists for revivals; and Mr. Peter Moore amused himself with tyrannizing over the underlings. His name provoked a pun. One individual, who had probably suffered under his lash, alluding to the arbitrary disposition of the great Czar, wished he "could give to Saint Petersburg one Peter *More*;" and Peter Finnerty, the well-known reporter to the Morning Chronicle, upon some capricious suspension of the free list, extemporized the following epigram.

What! said Dick, with some surprise,
Have they sent Peter from the door?
From Drury's scenes, if they were wise,
They 'd send one Peter *More!*

Peter Moore, who had shewn much subserviency to Mr. Sheridan's interests, in getting the bill for rebuilding Drury Lane passed through the House of Commons, resolved to *attach* himself to him in death, and raised a monument which might serve for both of them, the inscription running something in this way:

To the memory
of
The Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan,
This monument is erected
by
His attached friend,
Peter Moore.

Our actor was on very good terms with the sub-committee, particularly with Lord Byron, Mr. Lambe and Mr. Calcraft. One day meeting the latter gentleman in the Strand, they stopped to converse upon the affairs of the theatre, and, to avoid the crowd, turned down Adam Street to the Adelphi Terrace. A door was opened and an old lady came out. Mr. Calcraft, as she approached, enquired of Munden: "Do you know who that is?" Munden replied in the negative, and the Member of Parliament, taking off his hat, said: "Mrs. Garrick, permit me to introduce to you Mr. Munden." Mrs. Garrick, with great animation, held out both her hands, and grasping the actor's, said: "I am most happy at this introduction. I have seen you often in another place, and wished to be known to you." Though very aged, she was lively and active, and prided herself on her finely turned ankle, which had been so much admired when she was Madlle. Violette.

Munden took for his benefit "The School for Wives" and "The Farmer." He did not latterly play Jemmy Jumps, in which he had acquired so much reputation, as his figure had become unsuitable for the part. Mr. Kean had for his benefit "Riches;" (Sir J. Bland Burgess's alteration from Massinger) and performed Luke in a very different style from Raymond, (the first representative of the part)

who, though a sensible and well-informed man, was a moderate actor. With other benefits, in which our comedian played Tipple (Flitch of Bacon), Nipperkin, and Brummagem, the Drury Lane season was brought to a close.

We have recently recorded the departure of the Tragic Muse, and have now to relate the disappearance of the Muse of Comedy. Mrs. Jordan did not play on any stage after the termination of the Covent Garden season 1813-14. She had become so involved, as to render it necessary to retire to the continent. Although in the receipt for years of a large income, she had a numerous family to provide for, and was a most kind mother. Her real name was Bland, and she had never been married. Her embarrassments at this juncture were occasioned by becoming security for a person, who espoused one of the daughters she had borne previously to her connection with the Duke of Clarence. She resided, under an assumed name, at Saint Cloud, near Paris, where she died July 3, 1816: her death was attended by some distressing circumstances. With all Mrs. Jordan's faults, she was a warm-hearted, charitable woman. As an actress she had no equal, since the time of Mrs. Clive, in her particular line; but she was fond of stepping out of her line, and then she was not great. She played the Country Girl, when an old woman, and such was the fascination of her manner, that the spectators were content to

believe that she was what she represented. She was not handsome (her picture by Romney is a flattering resemblance), but her speaking voice was one of the most melodious ever heard; and she sang pleasingly. She lived famous and died in obscurity!

The next season at Drury Lane commenced on the 20th September (1814) with "The Rivals." October 1, "The School for Scandal." Sir Peter Teazle, Mr. Wroughton; Sir Oliver Surface, Mr. Dowton: the latter was a very fine performance. Mr. Wroughton had been a contemporary of Garrick, and had played with the older actors with credit and success. Although he possessed few natural advantages, he had great judgment, and was a sound, sensible actor: but, as he could scarcely be called a comedian, the part of Sir Peter would necessarily have fallen to Munden, had not Mr. Wroughton played it at Drury Lane for many years, and remained therefore in possession. This gentleman's powers were at the present period on the wane; and he ceased to act after the close of the season. 25th, Miss Walstein, from Dublin, appeared as Calista in the "Fair Penitent." Miss Walstein had long filled the principal characters in tragedy at the Dublin Theatre, where she was a great favourite; until, happening to be seized with sudden indisposition, Miss O'Neil played her part, and displayed such talent that she took a firm hold of the Dublin audience. Munden had performed

Sir Peter Teazle to Miss O'Neil's Lady Teazle in Ireland, and spoke everywhere of her acting in strong terms of praise; but the Amateur management engaged Miss Walstein, leaving Miss O'Neil a prize to the rival house. Miss Walstein played Letitia Handy, Lady Teazle, Lady Restless (All in the Wrong—Wroughton played Sir John Restless very well), Rosalind, and Lady Townley; but she was not successful in London, and the committee did not re-engage her. On the contrary, Miss O'Neil,—so lately her inferior in rank as an actress, on the other side of the Irish Channel,—took possession at once of the chair left vacant by Mrs. Siddons, and divided the town with the other great luminary—Kean. It should seem as if fortune, to compensate for a long dearth of excellence in tragedy, had formed, at once, two new moulds of Garrick and Siddons. Miss O'Neil, though not Mrs. Siddons's equal, was the nearest approach to her we have seen. In Mrs. Haller, she was, perhaps, superior; for whilst she possessed the highest qualities of acting, her youth and figure corresponded more with the conception of the part. Her description of watching the sports of the children was delivered in the tones of tenderness and truth. October 17, Munden played Captain Bertram to Bannister's Jack Junk. February 1, "Town and Country" was performed at Drury Lane.

Reuben Glenroy, Kean; Plastic, Wallack; Trot, Munden; Cosey, Dowton; Capt. Glenroy, Rae; Hawbuck, Knight; Hon. Mrs. Glenroy, Mrs. Glover; Rosalie Somers, Mrs. Horn. It is impossible to imagine a play better acted. Kean was powerfully effective in Reuben Glenroy. The noble critics in the green room were prepared to find fault with his dress,—a suit of black with Hessian boots,—but he slipped by the door of the green room, and did not wait to hear their opinions. Plastic was played with great spirit and judgment by Wallack. Mrs. Glover was, as she always is, animated and correct in Mrs. Glenroy; and Mrs. Horn looked a very interesting and lovely Rosalie Somers, and spoke the dialogue in a style of great simplicity. The Town and Country friends, Cosey and Trot, did all that the author would let them do. Hawbuck was written for Emery, and, as the name implies, intended for a heavy, stupid-looking, ungainly lad, with his head so crammed with Greek and Latin as to be fit for nothing. Knight's lively and bustling action was hardly what the author meant; but he made amends by his irresistible drollery, particularly in the scene where he drops the tray. Dowton was very great in that part of Cosey where Rosalie's absence is discovered; and the whole grouping of the scene, with the serious attitude of the actors, formed a fine picture. 16th, Munden

played the third witch in Macbeth; and March 11th, Dozey, in a new farce by T. Dibdin, called "Past ten o'clock and a rainy night." As this was the last original part, on which he conferred celebrity by his acting,—for there was little in the part itself, which, in the hands of an ordinary actor, would have been insignificant,—some account of the piece is subjoined. The characters are Dozey, *(an old sailor—a Greenwich pensioner)* Munden; Sam Squib, *(an old soldier—a Chelsea pensioner)* Bannister, ; Bantam, *(servant to young Punctual)* Knight; Old Snaps, *(guardian to Lucy and Nancy)* Penley; Harry Punctual, *(in love with Nancy)* Wallack; Charles Wildfire, *(in love with Lucy)* Barnard; Young Snaps, Fisher; Sir Peter Punctual, Gattie; Lucy, *(in love with Wildfire)* Mrs. Edwin; Nancy *(in love with young Punctual)* Mrs. Orger; Silence Mrs. Harlowe. Dozey and Squib are in the service of Old Snaps. He particularly orders them not to admit any person into the house except his own son and Sir Peter. Wildfire pretends that he is pursued by a bailiff. Squib, who had served under Wildfire's father, lets him into the house to avoid the bailiff. He also lets in young Punctual, who pretends to be Sir Peter. Old Snaps comes home,—Nancy and Lucy make their escape in the great coats of Sir Peter and Dozey. The gentlemen get out by a balcony, and a reconciliation is

effected. It will be seen that these were slender materials to work upon; but Munden took as much pains with his part, as if he were a young actor struggling for fame. He dressed and painted the old Greenwich pensioner to the life, (he painted his neck which was bare) and laboured to produce a perfect personification. His chief point in the dialogue was the description of a naval engagement, in which he was wonderfully energetic, and was cheered by loud bursts of applause from the audience. Knight was very clever in Bantam, and played up to Munden in the scene just noticed. Bannister had an indifferent part, and, after a night or two, he relinquished it. April 22, was produced a new tragedy, by Mrs. Wilmot, entitled "Ina," which was damned. Mr. Kean played Egbert, and had to endure the novelty of a storm of hisses, not directed against his acting, but against the piece. He delivered the following passage, with his finger pointed to the skies, in a very animated manner.

> The element of water moistens earth,
> But blood flies upwards, and bedews the Heavens!

May 22, Munden played Jabal to Elliston's Sheva, for the benefit of the latter. 31st, he chose for his own benefit, the "Road to Ruin" in which a Mr. Gordon, from Liverpool, played Goldfinch with some success. The other characters were,—Harry Dornton

Elliston; Silky, Dowton; Sulky, R. Palmer; Widow Warren, Mrs. Sparks; Sophia, Miss Kelly. This was a strong cast. That excellent actress, Miss Kelly, played Sophia, with great archness and humour. The after-piece was a new musical farce called "Honesty's the best Policy." It opened with a duet between Miss Kelly and Miss L. Kelly, commencing with "Bright descends yon orb of day," and the clumsy scene shifters put the moon in the distance.

June 1st, Mr. John Bannister took his leave of the stage, making his last appearance in the Comedy of "The World," and the after-piece of "The Children of the Wood," and addressing the audience on his retirement, attended by the principal actors on the stage. His reception was in the highest degree flattering, and his farewell impressive. The powers of mimicry, which Mr. Bannister possessed in such an eminent degree, were of great service to him in such parts as Colonel Feignwell, and the Three Singles; but the main feature of his acting was what the French term *bonhommie*, which carried the auditor's feelings with him. This quality formed the charm of his performance of Walter in "The Children of the Wood." Unquestionably, the highest quality in an actor is the *ars celare artem;* but with Bannister, in pathetic parts, all seemed to come from the heart. It was the same with him in private life. He

spoke what he thought, and of those who merited commendation with the most kindly feelings,—with harshness, of nobody. He was wholly free from envy—that "vaccine virus" of actors. He dwelt, with the enthusiasm of a devoted frequenter of the theatres, on the perfections of his contemporaries; of nobody's abilities did he speak higher than of Munden's. The writer, in walking up and down Gower Street with Mr. Bannister, took the liberty of consulting with him on the form of a short address, which he was requested by his father to put together on the occasion of the latter's retirement from the stage, and was listened to with the most polite attention, and earnest wish to be of service. Garrick had great expectations of Bannisters's success in tragedy; but he wisely relinquished that line as he grew older, and trusted to comedy. He had few equals in the parts he played; for besides his powers of pathos, he possessed a vein of genuine humour. As a private gentleman, Mr. Bannister was an honour to the stage. He was respected in every circle, and loved by those who knew him. He lived very happily in his retirement, and died at a good old age.

June 8th. Our actor played Mainmast. 9th, Polonius, to Kean's Hamlet; first Grave-digger, Dowton. July 5th, Davy, in "Bon Ton," for Spring's benefit. 6th, The theatre was closed in consequence of Mr. Whitbread's

death; a proper tribute of respect to one who had taken so active a part in its concerns; and whose untimely end is supposed to have been hastened by the labour which he had bestowed in arranging its affairs, and the vexation he experienced at its unsuccessful commencement. 11th, Munden played King Arthur; 12th, Crack.

Miss Mellon quitted the stage at the close of this season; the last part she played was Audrey. This lady, though not a first-rate actress, was arch and lively. She played Mrs. Candour very well. After, being *supposed* to gain a prize in the lottery, the real prize was discovered to be the hand of Mr. Coutts, and his enormous fortune, to which the Duke of St. Albans, subsequently, added a coronet.

The "Sketches of the Performers," by Mr. Leigh Hunt, appeared at this time in the "Examiner" newspaper, and obtained a great reputation. Mr. Hunt thus characterizes the acting of Munden:—

"One of the most amusing comedians living, if not the most amusing of all in certain characters, after Liston, is Mr. Munden. He is not so great a one, perhaps, as the lovers of broad farce may think him; but, on the other hand, he is much greater than the indiscriminating objectors to grimace may allow. Certainly, the work he makes with his face is equally alarming as well as droll; he has a sort of complicated grin, which may be thus described:—he begins by throwing aside his mouth at the corner with as little remorse as a boy putting it down with his fingers; then he jerks up his eye-brows;

then he brings his mouth a little back again with a show of his teeth; then he pulls down the upper lip over the top row, as a knight might his vizor; and finally consummates the joke with a general stir round and grind of the whole lower part of the face. This, accompanied with some dry phrase, or sometimes with a single word, the spectators always find irresistible, and the roar springs forth accordingly. But he is a genuine comedian, nevertheless; with a considerable insight into character as well as surface, and with a great power of filling up the paltriest sketches. We have known him entertain the audience with a real, as well as sophisticated humour, for five or six minutes together, scarcely speaking a word the whole time, as in the part of the sailor in the 'English Fleet;' and in one, we think, in an afterpiece called the 'Turnpike Gate,' where he comes in and hovers about a pot of ale which he sees standing on a table, looking about him with ludicrous caution as he makes his advances, half afraid and half simpering, when he has got near it; and then, after circumventing it with his eyes, and feeling, over and over again, with some more caution, looks into it in the most ludicrous manner imaginable, and exclaiming in an under voice of affected indifference and real chuckling: "Some gentleman has left his ale." Mr. Munden is remarkable for dressing, as well as acting old age; and is equally good in the two extremes of generous old men, and mercenary; the warm-hearted admiral, and the close fisted city hunks. His cordiality would be still better, if his propensity to grimace did not interfere,—a propensity always dangerous from the success it has."

**Drury Lane season 1815—16, Sept. 9th, "John Bull." 12th, "The Magpie, or, the Maid of Palaiseau," an adaptation from the French, by T. Dibdin; the subject was so popular, that two other versions appeared. This piece owed its success to the powerful**

acting of Miss Kelly. It was performed thirty-nine times. Munden was induced to play a very indifferent part (the Bailli) to add strength to the cast. 14th, he played Don Jerome, in the "Duenna." 16th, that very amusing actor, Mr. Harley, made his first appearance at this theatre in Lissardo; and on the 26th, Mrs. Mardyn, from Dublin, came out in Amelia, in "Lover's Vows;" she acted with great spirit, and her beauty was an additional attraction; Munden played Verdun. 28th, "The Beggar's Opera;" Macheath, Mr. T. Cooke; Peachum, Munden; Lockit, Dowton; Filch, Knight; Polly, Mrs. Dickons; Lucy, Miss Kelly; Mrs. Peachum, Mrs. Sparks. Oct. 19th, Skirmish, in the "Deserter," Munden. Nov. 3rd, "The Birthday;" Capt. Bertram, Munden; Jack Junk, Dowton. 15th, a new farce, by Poole, called, "Who's Who? or, the Double Imposture;" Sam Dabbs, an apothecary's man, Munden. This was a comic extravaganza, and told well. Dec. 14th, was performed "The Merchant of Bruges," an alteration from Beaumont and Fletcher, by the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird; principal characters: Goswin, or Florez, Kean; Clause, or Gerrard, Holland; Hubert, Rae; Vandunck, Munden; Wolfort, S. Penley; Heinskirke, Raymond; Beggars:—Higgin, Oxberry; Prigg, Harley; Gertrude, or Bertha, Mrs. Horn; Jaculin, Miss L. Kelly.

Kean played an indifferent part with great effect. In the scene with Goswin and Gertrude,—when he exclaimed, pointing to Mrs. Horn, who performed Gertrude, "Is she not beautiful?" the audience acknowledged the justness of the allusion by a round of applause. After the play, the writer, in conversation in the green-room with Lord Byron, was asked how he liked the alteration, which his Lordship said, had cost Mr. Kinnaird a great deal of trouble. He remarked, "that it was trouble ill-bestowed, as there were many other old plays (of Massinger, especially,) which might be revived with greater advantage." "What plays?" said his Lordship. "The Duke of Milan" was mentioned. "I never read 'The Duke of Milan,'" was the unexpected reply.* "The Duke of Milan"

* It was a startling declaration of Lord Byron's, that, if by some great convulsion of nature English should become a dead language, "an Englishman, anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British epic and tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakespeare and Milton; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people." Sheridan, also, was supposed not to hold the earlier dramatists in great reverence. From the time when his connection with Drury Lane was dissolved, he had never entered the theatre. One night he was prevailed upon by Lord Essex to sit with his Lordship in his box to witness the performance of Kean in Sir Giles Overreach. At the conclusion of the play, Lord Essex begged of him to go into the green-room. The actors

was, however, revived, altered by Tom Dibdin and somebody else; and the catastrophe, which is forced and unnatural in the original, was not much mended in the adaptation. Though Kean played Sforza very finely, he was badly supported, and the piece had not a run. Munden performed, successively, Marrall, Foresight, Costar Pearmain, Sir Robert Bramble, for his own benefit; and Brainworm, for Mr. Kean's. On the last night of the season he performed (by particular desire, and for that night only—Russet was his part) Sir Harry Beagle, in "the Jealous Wife."

---

flocked around the modern Congreve. In the scene of his former glory he was low and dejected. When Mr. Kean was introduced to him, every ear was awake, as it was supposed that Mr. Sheridan would pay him a compliment. The only remark he made was, "Mr. Kean, I am sorry to see you in so bad a part."

## CHAPTER IX.

New Season at Drury Lane — Lord Byron's Monody on Sheridan—Stephen Kemble's Falstaff—Kean in Sir Edward Mortimer—Appearance of Mrs. Alsop—Maturin's "Manuel"—Meeting of the Drury Lane Proprietors—proposal to let the Theatre—Retirement of Mr. Incledon and Mr. Johnstone—Death of Simmons—Mr. John Kemble quits the stage—Farewell dinner in honour of that great tragedian —"The Cobbler of Preston"—Criticism on Munden's Kit Sly—Analysis of Extracts from the "Cobbler of Preston" —Drury Lane Theatre let on lease to Mr. Elliston—Munden renews his engagement—Memorandum of agreement between Munden and Elliston—Unsuccessful revival of Miss Bailey's tragedy of "De Montfort."

DRURY LANE, 1816-17. First night of the season; "School for Scandal;" (Munden played Sir Peter Teazle) and the farce of "Who's Who." Mrs. Davison recited a monody on the death of Sheridan, written by Lord Byron; the last couplet, in which the point consisted, being a literal translation from Ariosto. 12th, "Duenna." 14th, "Lovers Vows." 17th, "Duenna," and "Past Ten o'clock." 19th, "Lovers Vows." 22nd, Mr. Kean made his first appearance this season in Sir Giles Overreach. His fame continued to increase with each fresh performance. He played successively Richard III.,

Sir Giles, Othello, Bertram, and Macbeth; after which was revived, (not acted for thirty years,) O'Keefe's humorous farce, "The Blacksmith of Antwerp." Oct. 5th, "The Rivals." 7th, "King Henry IV.;" Falstaff, Mr. Stephen Kemble. Mr. S. Kemble was not new to the London boards, as he had played at Covent Garden in 1783. He was a sensible and well read man, but not great in his profession. The only remarkable circumstance in his Falstaff was that he played it without stuffing. 28th, Kean performed Timon of Athens. Munden was solicited to study Apemantus, but declined; perhaps he exercised a wise discretion. Timon added another to the number of Kean's successful parts. Nov. 5th, was produced a new comedy which had long lain on the shelf, entitled "The Guardians," by the author of "The Honey Moon;" it was well written, and had a fair run. 23rd, Kean played, for the first time, Sir Edward Mortimer, in "The Iron Chest." If Mr. Colman had not been satisfied with Mr. Kemble, and *was* satisfied with Mr. Elliston, he must have been very fastidious indeed, if he beheld Mr. Kean's performance without approval. In the trial scene, the look of agony that preceded his reply to Wilford's interrogatory, the searching power of which he seemed at once to feel; his forced calmness, and attempt to smile

when he replied: "I answer—no!" formed one of those striking commentaries on the text which were the triumphs of Kean's acting. The imitation of these effects is the stock in trade of second-rate actors. "The Iron Chest" continued to be performed to crowded audiences. Munden played Adam Winterton in his chastest style, and dressed it admirably.

Jan. 3, 1817, Mrs. Alsop, a daughter of Mrs. Jordan, appeared in Violante, in "The Wonder." This lady remembered and preserved all Mrs. Jordan's points. She was plain in person, but she possessed her mother's animal spirits, and, above all, her voice. Feb. 20, Kean performed Othello to Booth's Iago. The circumstances of Mr. Booth's engagement, and not very creditable retreat from Covent Garden, which occasioned a rupture between the management of the two theatres are well-known. Never did Mr. Kean play Othello so finely, and never was a competitor so thrown into the shade. March 11th, Maturin's tragedy of "Manuel" was produced. Kean played the chief part; but the incidents were not well worked out, and after being performed a few nights, the tragedy was suffered to drop. There were some poetical passages in "Manuel;" this among the rest:—

> Joy comes to us a splendid hurrying stranger,
> And, ere we bid him welcome, Joy is gone!

But Sorrow is a dull and daily guest,
Who near us long his wonted seat hath taken,
Until his heaviness no burthen seems.*

The deficit in the receipts of the theatre now became so serious, that, at a meeting of the Drury Lane proprietors in March, Mr. George Robins, after finding fault with the management of the sub-committee, proposed that the theatre should be let. This course, Mr. Robins said, Mr. Whitbread had recommended should be adopted after the first three years. The censure of the sub-committee brought up several of the members, who, of course, did not join in their own condemnation, and, after some recrimination, Mr. Grenfell proposed and carried the following resolutions, in lieu of those which Mr. Robins had prepared.

1st. That the Theatre Royal Drury Lane be let upon a lease, provided that an adequate rent and a valid security can be obtained.

2nd. That a general meeting take steps accordingly, at the end of the present season; and that it be empowered to give publicity to such reports as in their opinion may be for the interest of the proprietors.

3rd. That the further proceedings be reported at the next annual meeting of the proprietors, in May.

---

* The contrast of Joy and Sorrow seems a favourite theme with Maturin. His novel of "Eva" contains a beautiful passage (we quote from memory):—"In joy we sympathise with strangers, but we weep only over those we love. The

Mr. Incledon, who had long been the most popular singer on the English stage, becoming advanced in years, and on the wane, was at length unable to procure an engagement at the London theatres. He was advised to try his fortune in America, and, previously, to take a benefit, bidding adieu to the English public. Under these affecting circumstances, his theatrical brethren flocked around him, and the Italian Opera-house, which was offered to him for the night, was crowded by his admirers to witness the performance of "Love in a Village," and "Three Weeks after Marriage." The writer of these pages had the gratification of contributing, by Mr. Incledon's desire, an address in verse, which was spoken with great feeling by Mr. Dowton, holding the "wandering melodist" by the hand, and encircled by the performers of both theatres. Mr. Incledon, in his prime, was perhaps the most successful ballad-singer ever heard in this country; and in nautical songs altogether unrivalled: he had also the good fortune to have Shield for a composer. But, as the taste for Italian music became prevalent, those who had for-

---

green leaves which the ancients scattered before their doors in their hours of mirth, have long since faded away; but we still find the phial of tears which they buried near the urns of their friends."

merly dwelt with rapture on his accents, affected to consider his style of singing vulgar. He returned to England, and died in 1826.

Not long after, the stage was deprived of Mr. John Johnstone. In some points there was a resemblance between the history of these eminent performers. Incledon had been a common sailor, and John Johnstone a common soldier. Both rose to distinction in consequence of the fine quality of voice they possessed. Johnstone, who came out in 1783, sank before the rising genius of Incledon, who made his appearance at the same theatre (Covent Garden) in 1790.

Incledon was a far superior singer to Johnstone; his voice combined uncommon power, sweetness, and flexibility; and he was no mean musician, having been originally articled to Jackson of Exeter, and received some instruction from Rauzzini; but he, in his turn, was eclipsed by Braham. Here the parallel ceases. Jack Johnstone was fond of saving money, and Charles Incledon of spending it. With the same prudence which distinguished him in private life, Mr. Johnstone, when he found he was losing ground in one branch of the profession, relinquished it at once, and assumed the Irish characters, in which it is doubtful if he ever had an equal; for he

played the well-bred Milesian gentleman, and the coarser Pat, with equal approximation to nature. He was as superior to Moody in Major O'Flaherty, as he was to Rock, in Murtoch Delany, and to our late favourite, poor Power, in Dennis Bulgruddery. He retained still such powers of voice as enabled him to sing his Irish songs* with inimitable effect, heightened as it was by his pure brogue and genuine humour; whilst, in the gentlemanly parts, his face, and person, and genteel carriage, rendered him at once the individual he represented. He died in 1828.

Simmons died about the time that Johnstone retired. His death was occasioned by an unfortunate accident: he fell down an area in Hanover Square and was killed. Simmons was the best second-rate comedian of late years, and sometimes trod closely on the heels of the first stagers.

April 28th, 1817, Mr. Dowton had for his benefit the comedy of "The Rivals," with the characters reversed—Mrs. Sparks playing Sir Anthony Absolute, and Dowton Mrs. Mala-

---

* It was whilst singing one of these songs, finishing with "a heigh down derry," that Johnstone was astonished by an echo from the gallery in the same note;—"Pay me, Jack Johnstone, my ten and a penny," which proceeded from a billiard-marker, whose *little account* he had omitted to settle.

prop. The farce was a new one called "John Gilpin," in which Dowton performed Johnny Gilpin, and Munden a Cockney named Anthony Brittle. It is to this performance of Munden's that Mr. Lamb alludes, in his letter to the editor of the *Athenæum*, which will be found in the sequel. May 17th, for Spring, the box-keeper's benefit, he performed, "for that night only," Governor Tempest, in "The Wheel of Fortune," Dowton playing Penruddock for the first time. 29th, for his own benefit, Trappanti, Grub ("Contrarities," in one act), and Cockletop.

On the 23d June, Mr. John Kemble took his leave of that stage which he had so long adorned. His last part was Coriolanus. Poetry, painting, and sculpture met to contemplate the setting of that sun—

> "Whose parting presence (made) more bright
> Our memory of the past."

A farewell dinner was given to this great actor, at the Freemasons' Tavern, at which Lord Holland presided; supported by a host of nobility, and the still more distinguished names of Moore, Campbell, Rogers, Crabbe, West, Lawrence, Flaxman, and Chantrey. The actors, too, crowded together to hail the departure of their master. "If," said Mr. Kemble, on returning thanks, after his health had been drunk with enthusiasm, "if I should live to

after times, it will be that my memory has been celebrated by the Muse that dictated 'The Pleasures of Hope.'" Never was impassioned verse, like Campbell's splendid Ode, recited with such force and feeling, or listened to with more mute attention, than, when Mr. Young, rising, and pointing towards the table, where sat the object of universal admiration, bade to the—

"Pride of the British stage—a long, a last farewell!"

When the impressive ceremony of the evening was over, and conviviality resumed, some merriment was excited by two trivial circumstances. Mr. Flaxman's health was proposed and responded to by the public; but being of a retiring disposition, he could not summon resolution at the moment to acknowledge the compliment; and his presence was not perceptible, as he was seated at the further end of the large room. A glee had accordingly commenced, when a diminutive figure walked up towards the cross table, holding in his hand a huge silver goblet, to address the chair. There were few who knew what was meant, as his thanks were delivered in a low tone of voice; and the fame of Flaxman was better known to Europe than his person to the miscellaneous assemblage then present. Charles Incledon, who was one of the company, sang some of

his songs with the energy of his early days. Talma inquired who he was; and hearing a name which had so long been celebrated in theatrical annals, jumped up from his seat, and embraced him *à la Française.*

Drury-Lane, 1817-18 (first night of the season), "School for Scandal." Sept. 29, was revived, Johnson's "Cobbler of Preston," which had not been acted for forty years. The *Morning Herald* thus notices this revival:—

"It is astonishing how a thing so merry lay so long in the shade. Some will probably recollect that it turns chiefly upon the circumstance of Kit Sly, the cobbler, being, while in a drunken mood, conveyed to the splendid apartments of Sir Charles Briton. Here Kit, upon his waking, is, as may be supposed, surprised out of his wits; but, being fond of ale, he soon calls for some, and recovers among his jolly servants a consciousness of his existence. He is told that he has been asleep for fifteen years, and that he waked a Spanish Grandee: all of which he soon believes. The consequences are, that for a while he forgets his business and his wife Joan, and that he is cured of his democratic politics. Munden, in this droll character, raised a loud and continued roar of laughter; he was festive to a high degree—indeed we have not lately witnessed anything in the way of a farce so true to its end of making merry as this same 'Cobbler of Preston.' There is something antiquated and repulsive, indeed, in its allusions to Whigs and Tories; and the object of the trick which is played upon the cobbler,—namely, to change his political sentiments, —does not easily come within the present rules of the stage; but the bad must be taken with the good. We laugh till we are tired at the wondering and ragged Kit Sly, and that is enough to redeem it from the other faults, glaring as they are."

"The Cobbler of Preston" was a farce, in two acts, written by Charles Johnson, and played at Drury-Lane, in 1716. There is another farce, on the same subject, by Bullock (see "Biographia Dramatica"), which was performed at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and is said "to have been begun on Friday, finished on Saturday, and acted on Tuesday following." It was hurried in this manner to get the start of Mr. Charles Johnson's farce of the same name. The hint of both was taken from Shakespeare's Drunken Tinker, in "The Taming of the Shrew;" and the extravagance of the conception was more supportable than when O'Keefe renewed the idea in his "Doldrum," in the person of an obstinate old gentleman of modern times. The reference of the *Morning Herald*, to "the antiquated allusions to Whigs and Tories," must be understood as meaning the Whigs and (Jacobins) Tories of the olden time; and the scene where the plot is laid was chosen, no doubt, as being a focus of disaffection. The copy before us was reprinted from Johnson's publication, and "published (by order of the committee of management) by and for T. Rodwell, Theatre Royal Drury-Lane, 1817." To add to their *enormous* profits, the committee had a printing press in the theatre, for the purpose of saving the expense of printing the bills of performance

The errors of the press in this (their publication) are almost as glaring as the errors of their management. As it is now scarce, we take the liberty to give an analysis, from Munden's copy, which contains several alterations in his hand-writing, to reduce the farce to one act, as he played it afterwards for his benefit. We copy, as the committee printed:—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Charles Briton . . . | Messrs. T. Cooke. |
| Squire Jolly . . . . . | Smith. |
| Peter (*disguished* (disguised) *as Lorenzo*) | Barnard. |
| Richard (*as Diego*) . . . | Kent. |
| John (*as Bartolino*) . . . | J. Smith. |
| William (*as Antonio*) . . . | Ebsworth. |
| Huntsman . . . . . | Fisher. |
| Constable . . . . . | Minton. |
| Butler . . . . . | Cooke. |
| Countryman . . . . . | Hughes. |
| Kit Sly . . . . . | Munden. |
| Marian (*daughter of Squire Jolly*) . | Miss Cubitt. |
| Cicely Gundy . . . . . | Mrs. Sparks. |
| Joan . . . . . | Mrs. Harlowe. |
| Alice . . . . . | Mrs. Hughes. |

Dragoons, Huntsmen, Servants.

The first scene opens with a view of Squire Jolly's garden, and a distant view of the country. Noise of horns and hunting at a distance. Enter Marian, and afterwards Squire Jolly. We collect from the dialogue that Marian is in love with Sir Charles Briton,

and that her father is averse to the match on account of Sir Charles's politics. Some of the speeches are printed unintelligibly, being assigned to the wrong party. Sir Charles Briton joins them, with the huntsmen; and Jolly, after reproaching him with the misdeeds of his retainers, concludes:—

*Jolly.*—Harkye, Sir Charles, let me see one of those knaves you support, return to a quiet demeanour and honest industry, from your influence, I'll take it for earnest of more, and you shall have my daughter.

*Sir C.*—Agreed, Sir, with all my heart. You shall speedily see this task accomplished, perhaps this very day.

## SCENE II.

THE OUTSIDE OF CICELY'S HOUSE.

*Enter the Cobbler, Cicely, Gundy, and Alice.*

*Cob.*—Huzza! huzza! hawks, halloo, my brave boys!

*Cic.*—Out, you knave! a pair of stocks, sirrah! a whipping post, you rogue! a whipping post!

*Cob.*—You are a baggage. Look'ee, say what you will of me, but don't disparage my family; the Slys came in with William the Conqueror; and so let the world slide.—(*Fencing with his stick.*)

*Cic.*—Sirrah! sirrah! will you pay for the mugs you have broke.

*Cob.*—No, not a single farthing. I will live upon free quarter. I am free of all the ale and roast beef in England, you housewife; I will have no reckonings paid at all; 'tis downright abomination; your sober, small beer whey-beards shall pay all the scott; and I will tax them at my will and pleasure, huzza! He that cannot leap a five-bar gate knows nothing of generalship.

*Alice.*—Vartal, father, what a pickle is he in!

*Cic.*—Well, Kit, I know my remedy, Kit; I'll go fetch the constable.—(*Exeunt*).

*Cob.*—Give me some more drink, you old dry puttock. Why, let the constable come; I'll answer him by law, I'll not budge an inch; let him come. What, are you for that sport? Have at you.—(*Tumbles down.*)—Well, you have conquered me. I surrender. Here, Cicely! Alice! a double jug; scorce (score) it.—(*Falls asleep*).

Sir Charles Briton, Squire Jolly, the huntsmen, and servants, enter, as from hunting, and finding Kit in this state, agree that he shall be conveyed to Sir Charles's house, and treated as a man of quality. The servants are directed to put on some Spanish masquerade dresses ordered for the Christmas holidays. Scene 3rd contains Cicely's charge against Kit to the constable for "burglary, for calling his good worship, Sir Jeoffrey Freeman, a presbyterian, shematick, and a roundhead:" and with "forswearing himself, and perjury, and bearing false witness, for knocking down Peter Turph (qy. Turf), because honest Peter would not drink his abomination healths."

## SCENE IV.

### A Bed-Chamber.

(*The doors opened, the Cobbler discovered in a rich bed; servants on each side the stage.*)

*Kit.* (*yawning*).—Heigh-ho! a pot of small eale, Joan, for heaven's sake, a pot of small eale; why do'st not come, woman? Hey-day! what!—why certainly I am awake.—Ah!

what!—I am most damnably frightened. I don't like these fellows; who are they? I dare not ask; no, not for the soul of me.

*Enter Lorenzo.*

*Loren.*—Is my Lord awake, Diego?

*Diego.*—Softly, Lorenzo, softly; he is asleep still. Heaven grant this sweet refreshment may do him good.

*Loren.*—His Majesty has sent to know how he rested last night.

*Diego.*—Better than usual, truly—better than usual; he does not stir yet;—how greatly the King honours him!

*Kit.*—I am most horribly frighted. The King send to know how I rest! I am most damnably frighted.

(*Diego goes to the bed, and Kit sneaks his head under the bed-clothes.*)

*Diego.*—He sleeps still; the doctor, when he comes, will do wonders. Well, if he recovers his Lordship, he will have a gratuity of a thousand pounds from the King for the cure; besides the honour of bringing back a person of his wisdom and weight to the service of the public.

*Kit.*—Humph—How! I cannot guess what the devil they drive at.

*Diego.*—'Tis a thousand pities so fine a gentleman should be thus disturbed in his head.

*Kit.*—Fine gentleman!

*Diego.*—Ten to one, now, when he awakes, he will ramble and rave as he used to do, about the story of the cobbler and his wife.

*Kit.*—A cobbler and his wife! why, they can't mean me, sure, all this while!

*Loren.*—Ay, how oddly will he talk of his being a poor cobbler; and that his wife, Joan, is the veriest vixen in all Lancashire.

*Diego.*—'Tis that beer, Lorenzo, that damn'd English strong beer, that distracts him so, and fills him with base ignoble thoughts.

*Loren.*—'Tis strange! no advice can prevail with him not to drink it.

*Kit.*—Ay! now 'tis plain they mean me. But—what! Nay; now I am more amazed than ever. Humph! What company am I got into? How came I in this bed?

*Diego.*—Order his Lordship's band of music in the antichamber gently to touch their instruments, and awake him with the sweetest, softest sounds of harmony.

*Kit.*—Music! What the devil are they about? Here is some cursed blunder made; I shall be hang'd, that is certain; I am got into a lord's bed-chamber, I don't know how; ay, and into his very bed, I don't know when.—(*A strain of music.*)

*Diego.*—I will venture to peep once more, and see if he stirs yet.

*Kit.*—Ah, Lord! now I am taken in the fact.

*Diego* (*softly at his curtains*).—My Lord, my honour'd Lord.

*Kit.*—What does your good worship say? Here is nobody here but I.

*Loren.*—Your Lordship's gown.

(*They put on his gown and set him at the feet of the bed.*)

*Diego.*—Will your Lordship taste some chocolate, or tea?

*Kit.*—If you please, you mistake me for some other person.

*Loren.*—Ah! Diego, Diego! he is still in the same unhappy distraction.

*Diego.*—What clothes will your Lordship please to wear to-day?

*Kit.*—Pho! what do you mean? I am Christopher Sly, of Preston heath. Nay, nay, do not gear a body thus.

*Diego.*—Your English brocade will be too hot, and the Persian too cool; I think your Genoa ash-coloured velvet will suit your honour best to-day.

*Kit.*—Nonsense, nonsense, it is well known I have no more doublets than backs, nor no more stockings than legs, nor no

more shoes than feet; nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes peep through the upper leather.

*Diego.*—Heaven, good heaven, amend this idle humour: Oh! that a man so born, in such esteem and credit, of so clear a judgment, and so sound an understanding, should be possessed by such an evil spirit!

*Kit.*—What, would you make me mad? Am I not Kit Sly; old Sly's son of Wigan? Ask Cicely Gundy, the eale wife of Preston, if she know me not; if she say I am not nineteen-pence-halfpenny on her score for sheer eale, score me up for the most lying knave in Christendom.

*Diego.*—Oh! this it is that makes your lady mourn.

*Loren.*—Oh! this it is that makes your servants droop.

*Bart.*—Therefore your noble kindred shun your house,
As driven hence by this strange lunacy.
Behold your servants all attend around,
Each in his office, ready at your nod.

*Kit.*—Very well, very well, then you say I am a lord.—Ah!

*Diego.*—You are a lord; and you can draw your lineage down from the flood; so noble is your name.

*Kit.*—Oh! Oh! but am I really, really a Lord?

*Loren.*—Ah! my good Lord, why should you doubt your worth?
You have a lady far more beautiful
Than any woman in this waning age.

*Kit.*—A lady—Ah! What, is she handsome? very handsome?

*Loren.*—Until those tears, which she has shed for you,
Like wasting floods o'erran her lovely face,
She was the fairest creature in all Spain.

*Kit.*—Spain?—Am I a Lord? And have I such a lady? Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now? I do not sleep; I see, I hear, I speak. Oh! pooh; it would be very rude and impertinent in me to doubt any longer. Well, bring

our lady hither to our sight. And, prithee, friend, once more, a pot of the smallest eale.

*Loren.*—Oh ! how we joy to see your wits restored.
Oh ! that once more you knew but who you were !
These fifteen years you have been in a dream,
Or when you waked, so waked, as if you slept.

*Enter Marian, as his lady, with two female attendants, and Sir Charles, disguised as a doctor.*

*Mar.* How fares my noble Lord ?

*Kit.* Marry, I fare well ;—here's cheer enough. But pray where's my wife ?

*Mar.*—Here, my good Lord. I have brought you a learned doctor. What is your Lordship's pleasure ?

*Kit.*—Hah ! a goodly wench ! a *bona roba* in troth. Now shall I know whether this be a dream or no, in a moment. Are you my wife, forsooth ? Ah ! why don't you call me husband ? My men say I am a lord, and I am your good man.

*Mar.* My husband and my lord, my lord and husband. I am your dearest wife in all obedience.

*Kit.*—Very well ; I am glad to hear it. What must I call her ?

*Diego.*—Madam.

*Kit.*—Alice Madam, or Joan Madam ?

*Diego.*—Madam, and nothing else ; so lords call their ladies.

*Kit.*—Madam, they say that I have slept and dreamt some fifteen years, or thereabouts.

*Mar.*—Yes ; and it seemed a tedious age to me.

*Kit.*—Hah ! that's much ! Servants leave me and Madam alone, before I take t'other nap. Madam wife, come and kiss me.

*Doct.*—My honor'd lord, this would endanger a relapse ; such a gratification, now, would cause a tumefaction, which would occasion an inflammation, which might increase to a conflagration, and thereby give birth to a schirrification, which

must end in a mortification, which is, properly speaking, a dissolution of action, in consequence whereof the springs of life stand still: the vulgar call it death. (Spoken very fast).

*Kit.*—Zounds, Mr. Doctor, I'll venture all that, I am not going to be directed by you in this matter; come, Madam wife, if we give ear to this idle rascal, I may fall into a dream again, and may'nt have a kiss for fifteen years longer.

*Mar.*—Thrice noble lord, let me intreat of you to pardon me;

> For your physicians all agree in this,
> 'Tis certain your distemper will return;
> I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

*Kit.*—Ay! Well, I should be loath to fall into my dreams again, for I am devilishly afraid of relapsing into a Cobbler. But hearky! your whiskers, Don Diego—what countryman am I, pray?

*Diego.*—Ah, my good lord, there's not a Condé in all Arragon can boast a family so ancient, or a more plentiful inheritance.

*Kit.*—An Arrogant Condé!—what's that?

*Diego.*—The King of Spain himself, whom we all serve, has not a nobler subject.

*Kit.*—What! then I am a Spaniard, am I? Prithee, my friend, what language do we speak now? Ah!

*Diego.*—Truly, my lord, I think we speak better Spanish here than they do at Madrid.

*Loren.*—Oh! Alcantara has been always famous for the purest Spanish.

*Kit.*—Ha, ha, ha, why these mustachioed, stiff-necked footmen are a pack of the most consumed liars.—Hearky! friend, 'tis in vain to argue this matter with you I find; but I do, between you and I now, positively assure you that I never could speak any other language than plain English in my life.

*Diego.*—Why, how is it possible, my lord, for me, who

understand nothing but Spanish, to answer you, if you spoke nothing but English?

*Kit.*—Ay, why that's true, very true; well, well, I will ask no further questions, for they puzzle me consumedly. For heaven's sake let us have a cup of strong beer. Nay, don't stare: for by the Lord Harry, I will have it so, or I'll flay you all alive (*Exeunt two servants for jugs and horns, while two others bring forward table and chairs.*) Ay, and you shall all sit down and drink bumpers round, as fast as you can pour them down. Come, Diego, you are my first minister; sit on my right hand: so.

*Doct.*—Might I presume, my lord, that English beer, which you delight in, is too heavy for your constitution.

*Kit.*—What? how? are you giving your advice again, sirrah? Zounds! you smutty-muzzled rascal, pretend to tell me that strong beer is not good for me!—lend me your spit friend; I'll put that dog to death this moment. (*Doctor retires*) What, is he gone? 'tis well: what a plague, if one did not pluck up a spirit, I see—come, Diego—all of you sit down (*two servants bring in a large jug of strong beer and country drinking-horns*). Ay, that is somewhat like! set it down and place the horn in my right hand: come, here's to all true hearts and sound bottoms! (*All*) True hearts and sound bottoms! (*they drink*).

*Diego.*—Ay, this is a loyal health indeed!

*Kit.*—Ah Diego! if we were not in Spain now, I could drink such healths as would set us all together by the ears in a moment! Are you a Whig or a Tory?

*Diego.*—I don't know what your Lordship means.

**Kit's wife, Joan, now enters in a great passion, but they shuffle her out, and persuade Kit, that what he saw was a vision of the imagination.**

**Act the 2nd opens at the constable's house,**

whither Sir Charles's butler, who has been made dead drunk, and dressed in the cobbler's clothes, has been conveyed. Joan, whose senses are a little confused by the ale, with which the servants plied her in Sir Charles's pantry, is induced to believe it is her husband. Joan however returns home, and finds her actual spouse, just awake, having been transported back to his abode.

### SCENE VI.

*A Cobbler's Stall on one side of the stage, and a little poor bed on the other, Kit in bed; a stool with the morning-gown; a cobbler's working stool and tools. Boots, shoes, and galoshoes &c.*

*Kit, (alone)*—Hey oh! where are my servants? Here, some of you bring me a whole butt of your English small beer. Here Diego! Lorenzo! Bartolino! why, where are my varlets? I'll have the dogs' liveries stripped over their ears, and turn'em all out to grass. Though I must own I have a sort of liking to Senior Diego, he took his glass off supernaculum—Ah! what! why this is my old flock hammock! Ay, and there is my spacious shop too, of a yard long! now am I most consumedly puzzled, to know whether I dreamt before, or whether I dream now, or whether 'tis all a dream from beginning to ending? whether I am my lord What d'y'call him, or Kit the Cobbler? somebody or nobody?

*Enter Joan.*

Hold! here comes one who will interpret all my dream, with a vengeance.

*Joan (busy sweeping and setting the room to right)* Was there ever such a sot! All our neighbours cry shame o'en—wou'd he were here! I would rattle him! Good luck! What

a litter this shop is in ! We have a mort of work and not one stitch set ; there's neighbour Clumps' boots to be liquor'd ; there's Peter Hobson's shoe'n to be tapp'd ; besides Dame Goslin's pattens, and the curate's galoshoes that are to be lin'd with swan skin. Oh Lud ! Oh thieves ! murther ! fire !

*Kit.*—How now ! what, is the woman mad ?

*Joan.*—Thieves, thieves !

*Kit.*—Silence, I say. What has possessed the woman ? Either take that abominable shrill pipe of thine a note lower : or I will——

*Joan.*—Who are you ? what are you ? how came you here ? and what business have you in this place ?

*Kit.*—Ah !

*Joan.*—Oh ! lud ! Kit ! why, I left thee just now fast asleep at the constable's house. I staid but one moment at Goody Tattle's, to tell her to take her cow out of the lees. And see if thou hast not slipt home, and got into bed before me !

*Kit.*—Let us hear that again !—Ah ! where didst thou leave thy husband, good woman, dost thou say ?

*Joan.*—Why, I tell thee Kit, I left thee at the constable's, drunk asleep ; and I marl how thou gottest home so soon !

*Kit.*—Haud ye ! haud ye ! Not so fast, woman. I will take care thy husband shall come to no harm : he is an honest man : he loves a cup of ale, I have heard ; but that's a small fault. Go home, be easy ; my servants shall bring thee thy husband.

*Joan.*—Thy servants ! Out, you drunken sot. Why, Kit, what do you deny your lawful wife, Kit ? (*Crying.*) Oh, oh ! was ever poor woman so used by a saucy knave.

*Kit.*—Look thee, Joan, that I do not use any discipline to thee now, if I can guess at thy husband's temper, may be a proof to thee that I am not thy husband. But be peaceable, and presently too, or else I know, by some infallible symptoms, that I shall dream of strapping thee most unmercifully.

*Joan.*—Oh, lud! oh, lud! to be sure our Kit is distraught; his brains are quite addled. What shall I do with 'em? Come, Kit, I won't be angry: lie down in the bed; do ye so, and I will get a cardous posset.

*Kit.*—No, no; I will arise, and consider this matter uprightly: ay, and with much wisdom. But do not multiply words; if thou art my wife, be obedient and silent. Come, give me my clothes, woman.

*Joan.*—Clothes! god dy'e, now! god dy'e! here are no clothes. Why, Kit, what hast thou done with thy clothes, Kit?

*Kit.*—No clothes! no clothes. Nay, I do not remember that I wore any clothes when I was your Spanish lord yonder, neither.

*Joan.*—Oh, gemini: what is this, Kit? Oh, the father; what a fine silken gown is this here.

*Kit.*—Now the murder's out! now it is plain again. (*In a rage.*) Answer me, thou Witch of Endor. How came I hither? How did you steal me away? Where are your imps? Restore me to my lordship, my house, my lands, my servants, and my cellar of strong beer.

**A countryman drops in, to whom Kit speaks in his lordly style, to which the honest rustic replies:—**

*Coun.*—I came in an honest way, as I may say, to take my sho'en, if they are soal'd and heel-pieced. And so, my lord, if you pleasen, as they say'n, to wax one end of thread, and handle your awl for a minute or two, you may be a lord afterwards, and welcome—ha, ha, ha. Here, take your thirteen-pence, and sole my shoes directly.

*Kit.*—Ah! what! Thirteen-pence dost thou say? Thirteen-pence is, indeed, a considerable sum; and seriously now, I do not find that my lordship has any money at all. I suppose that my steward keeps my cash. Ay, but where is he?

The scoundrels are all vanished. What shall I do? My mind misgives me now, that I can sole a pair of shoes by instinct. Od, I'll try and earn a penny in an honest way. Fetch me my shop here, and I'll begin my work directly. (*They fetch his stool down.*) Joan, take the poor fellows thirteen-pence, and fetch a double flaggon of Goody Gundy's stingo. I think I heard of such an eale wife among you, when I was in England.

**While his wife is gone to fetch the eale, Kit sits down to his work, and soliloquizes:—**

*Kit.*—Honest Kit, or my lord, or my lord Kit, for which of you I speak to, I cannot tell at present: the question, then, between me and myself, is, whether I am a dreaming cobbler, and (or) a waking lord? Yesterday my servants were all Spanish gentlemen; my wife was a lady; my bed silken; my house as big as a church; my meat so good that I could not tell what it was; and my beer as right as ever was tipp'd: all, all these things, I say, did then appear to these eyes of mine (if these eyes of mine are mine, and were then open) to belong to me, their natural lord and master; and now, this morning, my fine lady is turned into a scolding vixen; my great house into a wretched hovel; my spacious chamber into a cobbler's stall; and my silken bed into musty flocks and filthy woollen. In short, all things around me appear to be the rascally appurtenances of Kit, the cobbler. I am horribly transmogrified from day to day! Pho! plague! it must be so; I am but a cobbler after all: at least I'll fix here now; 'tis better to be somebody than nobody.

**Again do the "foul fiends" assail poor Kit. In his wife's presence the four servants come, in their Spanish habits, and bear him away, lamenting his "old distraction." Joan and the countryman are lost in astonishment, as**

he retires, preceded by two attendants as ushers, with white wands, the music playing a march, and the four servants following. At his departure, he addresses Joan:

*Kit.*—Good woman, fare you well. Commend me to your husband; if he would be sober, he is a special workman, that is certain; I'll be his customer, he shall mend my shoes: is he a good hand at heel-tapping?

## SCENE III.

*The hall-house discovered; a spacious room; the cobbler at a table; strong beer upon it; his servants waiting round him; and a doctor at his right hand, offering him a vial.*

*Kit.*—Look'ee, doctor, make as many damnably ugly faces as you please, I'll not taste a drop of your physic.

*Doc.*—My lord, with the most profound submission, 'tis impossible to recover your lordship without the administration of medicine.

*Kit.*—Why, then, I will remain as I am. What would the fellow have? Harkee, tap a fresh hogshead, I command you. This damn'd fellow denies me a kiss from Madam wife, my roast beef, and pretends to be my friend!

*Doc.*—My lord, 'tis absolutely necessary that your lordship should bleed.

*Kit.*—Ah! bleed!

*Doc.*—It will qualify this unnatural heat in your blood, and make it circulate freely.

*Kit.*—You are a son of a ——. (*Throws a glass of ale in his face.*) Leave my presence; I am not able to bear the sight of you.

*Doc.*—It is not you, my lord, who use me thus, but your distemper; which, for that reason, I am resolved to conquer. It will be proper, therefore, to shave your head.

*Kit.*—Shave my head!

*Doc.*—After which we will make a couple of blisters incisional in the nape of your neck.

*Kit.*—What! Am I to be butchered here? Oons, what do you mean?

*Doc.*—My lord, I shall act only according to the celebrated prescription of that most learned doctor of the faculty, Seignior Palambrino Cento Galfrido Pedro de Mendosa.

*Kit.*—I don't care if Seignior Doctor Mendosa Palfrey and you were both hang'd in a string. Sirrah, I dismiss you from my service; I'll have no more to do with you.

*Doc.*—Come, Lorenzo, Bartolino, hold him: this is the most proper time imaginable; the moon is in the last quadrant of the ecliptic. (*They hold him, the Doctor draws his incision knife, while Kit struggles and cries out.*)

*Kit.*—Dogs, rogues, villains, I'll have you all hanged.

**They then tell him that a troop of dragoons have surrounded the house, and that they have a warrant to arrest him for high treason.**

*Kit.*—What shall I do? Could not you clap me into an empty hogshead, in the cellar? Do, Diego, do; and throw a Cheshire cheese, and a peck loaf or two after me."

**Squire Jolly enters, disguised as a Captain of dragoons, and extorts from him a confession that he was concerned in the riots in the county. Munden, in his alterations, has very judiciously omitted the politics, which are obsolete. He substitutes the following oath for Kit Sly's confession.**

*Capt.*—Attend, now! Swear you believe your wife honest.

*Sly.*—I swear I believe my wife honest.

*Capt.*—Swear that you will put your strap to its right use, and never beat your wife again.

*Sly.*—I swear to put my strap to its right use, and never beat my wife again.

*Capt.*—And never more to get drunk and neglect thy business.

*Sly.*—All my comforts, one by one, they take from me;—and never more to get drunk and neglect my business.

*Capt.*—Well, I believe your promise to reform is pretty honest. Get thee home, Kit,—cobble thy shoes—avoid drunkenness—and amend thy life for the future. (*All the parties then discover themselves, and the Cobbler of Preston is disenchanted.*

Christopher Sly is the subject of one of Elia's eloquent encomiums "on the acting of Munden:"—

"Can any man *wonder*, like him? can any man *see ghosts*, like him? *or fight with his own shadow*—'Sessa'—as he does in that strangely-neglected thing, the 'Cobbler of Preston;' where his alternations from the cobbler to the magnifico, and from the magnifico to the cobbler, keep the brain of the spectator in as wild a ferment as if some Arabian night were being acted before him."

Drury Lane, 1818, 1819. This season opened under the management of Mr. Stephen Kemble, who brought forward his son, Mr. Henry Kemble, in several principal characters in tragedy, but with indifferent success. Equally unsuccessful was the experiment of lowering the prices of the boxes to five shillings, and pit to three shillings. There was little of novelty this season; our actor continued to play his usual parts. The affairs of the theatre began to grow worse and worse, and at length it was obliged to be closed; the com-

pany playing, by virtue of a license granted by the Lord Chamberlain, for a short period, at the little theatre in the Haymarket, under the superintendence of Messrs. Munden, Rae, Holland, and Russell; Kean and Elliston, performed for their brother actors, one night each, it is believed, gratuitously. The Duke of Sussex patronized a night's performance, and the Duke and Duchess of York gave their sanction to another representation. July 13th, Miss O'Neil acted for the last time. Mrs. Haller, her most successful part, was the character in which she appeared. It was not formally announced that it was this young lady's intention to quit the stage; but she was shortly afterwards united in marriage to a gentleman of fortune, and now fills that rank to which none of her predecessors in the profession, who were so fortunate as to attain it, have lent a truer nobility than Miss O'Neil. Mrs. Charles Kemble also retired, having, during the long period she had graced the boards, scarcely had a competitor in the line wherein she chiefly excelled — melodrame. Those who recollect her as Miss De Camp, will hardly expect to see her equal in such characters as Edmund, (The Blind Boy); Theodore, (Deaf and Dumb); and, Morgiana, (Forty Thieves); and she added varied accomplishments, and some of an intellectual order, to the charm of her acting. Mrs.

Charles Kemble played once more, of late years, for the purpose of introducing to the public her daughter, Miss F. Kemble.

The period had now arrived, when, as had been long predicted, the committee had no alternative but to let the theatre; and, as "all men think all men mortal but themselves," it was not difficult to find victims to self-immolation. The first was Mr. Elliston. If ever there was a man led away by vanity, it was Robert William Elliston. With talents of a very high order in the strict line of his profession, he was ambitious to excel in every other. His tragedy, which was never very good, became at last intolerable; but he—

> "Was a man so various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome."

He tried all sorts of experiments,—building, book-writing, book-selling, and the freak of management. He took the Circus, and altered its name to the Surrey Theatre; and now became lessee of Drury Lane, with Mr. Russell for his stage-manager, and Mr. Winston, acting manager. Previous to opening the theatre he wrote in these terms to our actor:—

T. R. D. L.
Sept. 26th, 1819.

Dear Munden,

I am going to make your fortune. Tel me whether Tuesday, or Thursday, for 'the Dominie,' will suit you best. The part is six lengths, and little or no music. We shall

rehearse it Monday, and Tuesday; or Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The house is beautiful, and all going on well.

Yours, most truly,

R. W. Elliston.

Mr. Munden, &c. &c.

Notwithstanding this cool, off-hand sort of way of taking every thing for granted, Munden chose to decline the proferred "fortune." He was quite satisfied with the laurels he had gained, and did not covet an interference with Mr. Liston's well-merited reputation. The theatre opened with "Wild Oats," and "Lock and Key," on the 4th Oct.; and on the 7th, "Guy Mannering" was performed; Dominie Sampson, by Mr. Oxberry. Oct. 26th, Munden played Caustic. Nov. 1st, Sir Abel Handy. 2nd; Old Dornton, to Elliston's Young Dornton. Mr. Elliston played this part, and Rover, in "Wild Oats," in a style of lively, buoyant humour, which elicited applause sufficient to gratify any reasonable ambition. In the serious parts of Harry Dornton he was, likewise, affecting, natural, and impressive; perhaps, altogether, he was the ablest representative of the character, superior even to the original—Holman. In Rover, latterly, he grew prosy towards the end: when describing his departure from India with an empty pocket, instead of the rattling levity of Lewis, he *declaimed;* and as he slapped Munden on the

shoulder, and in a lengthened tone exclaimed: "Would'st thou have done so, little Ephra—im?" the latter would raise his eyebrows, which were very fully developed, and cast a significant glance at a fellow performer on the stage.

Munden revived for his benefit, 30th May, the comedy of "Fashionable Levities," in three acts, which had not been acted for twenty-five years. Welford, Elliston; Sir Buzzard Savage, Munden; Ordeal, Pope; Capt. Douglas, Hamblin; Nicholas, Knight; Lady Flippant Savage, Mrs. Glover; Clara, Mrs. Mardyn; Grace, Miss Kelly; with the "Cobbler of Preston," in one act; and "Past Ten o'Clock." June 19th, he played Harmony for Elliston's benefit; and 29th, John Moody, for that of Mrs. W. West and Mr. Knight. The theatre closed for the season on the 8th July; but was re-opened on the 15th August, in order that Mr. Kean might perform his principal characters, previous to his departure for America. The foolish practice of printing this tragedian's name in large characters at the foot of the bills, with similar puffs in red and black ink, was carried to the highest pitch of absurdity at this juncture.

Munden concluded a fresh engagement with Mr. Elliston for the ensuing season.* We

* I apprehend that our actor had always received the same

find it thus drawn up in his own hand-writing. As it is unsigned, we are not certain it was the agreement acted upon :—

"Memorandum of agreement between Mr. Elliston and Mr. Munden, both of Drury Lane Theatre, this 27th day of October, 1820.

"Mr. Munden agrees to perform the ensuing season, until the close of next May, for which he is to receive 20*l.* a week.

"Mr. Munden to have the privilege of writing two box-orders for the theatre every night during the season; and if orders go generally, Mr. Munden to write two more; and, if any performer is allowed more, Mr. Munden to have the same privilege.

"Mr. Munden's benefit to take place in May, with the notice of one month; but if the said benefit should be so fixed as to take place in the Epsom race week, then to be deferred to the week next ensuing. viz. June, 1821; unless the Monday previous to the said race week should be offered to Mr. Munden.

"Mr. Elliston agrees with Mr. Munden, that no forfeiture or deduction from the said salary shall, on any pretence whatever, be taken from him during the above period.

"If Mr. Munden should be ill more than one week, he will not claim any salary after that week, until he is able to perform again.

"Mr. Munden's benefit not to be fixed on a Friday or Saturday."

The theatre opened on the 30th October, with "The Road to Ruin." Munden played

---

salary since he joined the Drury Lane company. It is observable that he herein modifies his claim to his salary during illness, as his fits of gout had now become so frequent that he could not reasonably require it. T. S. M.

his customary parts. Nov. 20th, he performed the character of Pigtail, a tobacconist, formerly a sailor, in a new farce, by Jameson. Jan. 2, 1821, Moll Flaggon; this ought to have been a rich performance. A new singer, Miss Wilson, was now brought forward with great éclat, in Rosetta; Justice Woodcock, Munden. His benefit took place on the 30th of May, ("Secrets Worth Knowing," and, "The Turnpike-Gate.") July 3rd, a Mr. Mackay, from Edinburgh, appeared in Baillie Nicol Jarvie. He was a very chaste actor, possessing a great fund of dry humour, and played the character, (in which he received the high approval of Sir Walter Scott,) admirably; but was not engaged beyond a few nights.

September 20, Gattie performed Monsieur Tonson, in the farce founded on John Taylor's tale, and displayed extraordinary abilities in the part. He was not exceeded by the late Mr. Matthews in the humour of the delineation, and his French accent was very pure. Drury Lane was, unwisely, kept open during the summer.

The season 1821-2, commenced with "The Dramatist." Nov. 3, "Folly as it Flies:" and on the 27th, was revived the tragedy of "De Montfort." This was a play, which the critic, the poet, and the general reader had concurred in considering as one of the highest efforts of human genius: but, unhappily, the

witchery of the enchantress was confined to the closet. Scott has described Miss Baillie, the authoress, in glorious terms :—

> ——— "She, the bold enchantress, came,
> With fearless hand and heart on flame !
> From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure *
> And swept it with a kindred measure,
> Till Avon's swans, while rang the grove
> With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
> Awakening at the inspired strain,
> Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again."

Sheridan took credit to himself for having recommended this tragedy to the stage—Kemble and Siddons studied the two principal parts with assiduous care ; but, on its first representation it was listened to with cold approbation. Mr. Sheridan declared in the House of Commons that De Montfort "failed, he must say, through the perverted taste of the public." The noble bearing of Mrs. Siddons, in Jane de Montfort, was a living commentary on the text, wherein the accomplished authoress had sketched her with a skilful and flattering pen, as if she had sat for the model. Kemble's stately person, and melancholy, expressive countenance, were finely adapted to De Montfort ; and the look of horror he displayed, when, after the murder, he was brought to the front of the stage, and a light held up to his

* Shakespeare's lyre. Marmion, Introduction to Canto 3.

countenance, is said never to have been surpassed. Still the play failed. Yet a sanguine expectation was entertained by every lover of literature that, one day or other, "the perverted taste of the public" would be amended; and the powers of Mr. Kean were brought in aid of that desirable result. Nothing could be finer than his acting, particularly in the scene where he throws the dagger against the wall. Wanting the dignity of his predecessor, the open frankness of his manner on the reconciliation with the object of his hatred—his relapse—the deep remorse with which he uttered the lines:—

> "Tis done—'tis numbered with the things o'erpast!
> Would! would it were to come!

were all that the authoress, who was present, could desire. But she saw her offspring "drag its slow length along"—and drop a lifeless corpse. It was evident that verse, mighty as it is, could not compensate for want of incident arising from the ethical nature of the drama's construction. "De Montfort" was only performed five times.

Munden played Old Dornton, Sir Francis Gripe, Ephraim Smooth, Marrall; and February 23rd 1822, General Van, in the "Veteran," an opera, in three acts, by Mr. Knight; also in the "Cure for the Heart Ache," and "Secrets worth knowing (twice acted). May

18th, "John Bull" was acted, for the benefit of the distressed Irish; Mr. Dowton, who had not played this season at Drury Lane, offering his services, and Mr. Johnston returning to the stage, for this night only; the farce was "Two Strings to your Bow"—Lazarillo, Munden; whose engagement expired.

## CHAPTER X.

Death of Emery: benefit for his widow—Munden engages with Mr. Elliston for his last season—Takes leave of the stage on the 31st May, 1824—Account of his last performance, with criticisms on his acting, extracted from the "Times" and "John Bull" newspapers, the New Monthly and London Magazines, and the Literary Gazette—Original remarks, by Hazlitt, on Munden's Dogberry—Reflections on the evanescent nature of theatrical fame—Some account of our actor in his private capacity—His professional habits and studies—Personal anecdotes—Mr. Leigh Hunt's description of him—Offers made to Munden to induce him to return to the stage—His refusal—decease, Feb. 6, 1832—Mr. Lamb's letter to the "Athenæum," with comments on the merits of Munden's acting—A list of the parts he played.

OUR actor's performances during the years 1822 and 1823 were not very frequent. Emery died in July 1822, in distressed circumstances, and "The Rivals" was represented at Covent Garden for the benefit of his aged parents and widow, with seven children. Mr. Colman wrote an address, which was spoken by Mr. Bartley. Munden played Sir Anthony Absolute, and Messrs. Charles Kemble, Young, Liston, Jones, Wilkinson, Mrs. Edwin, Mrs. Egerton, Mrs. Gibbs, Miss Kelly, &c. &c., came forward with their powerful

aid. Many of Munden's old parts were played during his illness this season at Drury Lane by Mr. Terry, who had been engaged at that house; Munden declining to study new ones, as the fits of gout, which occurred more frequently, and became more prolonged, rendered him incapable of great exertion. He entered into an engagement with Mr. Elliston for a limited number of performances in 1823-4, with the avowed purpose of bringing his theatrical life to a decent termination. The Lessee was not insensible, as appears by the subjoined letter, to the advantage which was likely to arise from the exhibition of the final efforts of a comedian, who formed the last link between the present and the older actors.

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,
October 13, 1823.

My dear Sir,

I congratulate both myself and you, that the arrangement for your performances with me is completed, and I think that we shall shew them some of your comedies with a cast, such as they have never witnessed before.

Macready makes his entrée this evening, and thinking that your family might like to witness a brilliant house and reception, I have enclosed you a ticket for a private box and remain,

Dear Munden,
Yours, most sincerely,
R. W. Elliston.

To Joseph Munden, Esquire.

The season commenced on the 1st October,

with "The Rivals." Sir Anthony Absolute, Munden. October 16th, he played Old Dornton. 18th, Sir Peter Teazle. 21st, Crack. November 1st, Caustic. 3rd, Autolycus. February 6th, 1824, Marrall. March 10th, for Mr. Bunn's benefit, Nipperkin. May 15th, Old Rapid. 20th and 22nd, Old Dornton. 25th, Sir Peter Teazle. 27th, Sir Abel Handy (the free list suspended). 29th, Old Dornton. 31st, Sir Robert Bramble, and Dozey, being for his benefit and last appearance on the stage. *

Munden's *valedictum* was thus pronounced by the most facetious writer of the age, in an ode to Joe Grimaldi :

> And, may be, 'tis no time to smother
> Our griefs, when two prime wags of London
> Are gone: thou Joseph, one ; the other
> A JOE ! *sic transit gloria Munden !*

The relationship between the writer and his subject, suggested to him the propriety of abstaining from offering opinions of his own on his father's acting when he could find criticisms at hand in the language of others; and he has endeavoured to be as impartial as possible in the selection of extracts; above all, rendering justice to the distinguished performers who appeared on the same scene with his father, and whose generous rivalry contributed, without doubt, largely to his success. The comments on Munden's acting, which

* The receipts amounted to £577 18*s.* 6*d.*

are found from time to time in the critical journals, during the course of his public life, naturally multiplied towards its close, and little more is now necessary than to select the most able in illustration of his retirement from the stage.

The ticket for admission to our actor's farewell benefit, represented a Muse, resting on a lyre, and displaying an open book, with the inscription "All 's Well that Ends Well." The play-bill ran as follows:—

NEW THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

For the Benefit of

MR. MUNDEN,

And positively the last night of his appearance on any stage.

This evening, Monday, May 31, 1824.

His Majesty's servants will perform the comedy of

THE POOR GENTLEMAN.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Robert Bramble | Mr. Munden. |
| Sir Charles Cropland | Mr. Browne. |
| Lieutenant Worthington | Mr. Powell. |
| Frederick | Mr. Elliston. |
| Ollapod | Mr. Harley. |
| Corporal Foss | Mr. Oxberry. |
| (His only appearance this season.) | |
| Farmer Harrowby | Mr. Sherwin. |
| Stephen Harrowby | Mr. Knight. |
| Humphrey Dobbins | Mr. Gattie. |
| Warner | Mr. Webster. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Valet | Mr. Turnour. |
| Emily Worthington | Mrs. W. West. |
| Miss Lucretia Mac Tab | Mrs. Harlowe. |
| Dame Harrowby | Miss Green. |
| Mary | Miss Carr. |

In the course of the evening the following entertainments.

The favourite Ballad of " Kelvin Grove," by

MR. BRAHAM.

The admired song, " Bid me discourse," by

MISS STEPHENS.

A CHINESE DIVERTISEMENT.

The principal characters by

Mr. Noble. Mrs. Noble.
Mr. Oscar Byrne, Mrs. Oscar Byrne.
And the whole of the corps de ballet.

In the course of the evening

MR. MUNDEN

Will attempt to take leave of his friends and the public.

To conclude with the admired farce of

PAST TEN O'CLOCK AND A RAINY NIGHT.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Peter Punctual | Mr. Hughes. |
| Old Snaps | Mr. Gattie. |
| Young Snaps | Mr. Webster. |
| Captain Wildfire | Mr. Marcin. |
| Harry Punctual | Mr. Penley. |
| Corporal Squib | Mr. Fitzwilliam. |
| Bantam | Mr. Knight. |
| Old Dozey | Mr. Munden. |
| Nancy | Miss Cubitt. |
| Lucy | Miss S. Booth. |
| Silence | Mrs. Harlowe. |

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"Mr. Munden last night concluded his long, meritorious, and successful theatrical career. He has retired into the bosom of private life before his consummate talents had been impaired by time. The interest which this event excited, and the excessively crowded audience which it caused to assemble, proved incontestably the high estimation in which his social virtues and his scenic talents were held by the public. He has quitted the stage to enjoy a competency honourably acquired, attended by

—— That which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.

"Mr. Munden chose, for his farewell benefit, Colman's comedy of *The Poor Gentleman*, in which he supported the character of *Sir Robert Bramble*. He does not appear until the third act, and the moment he presented himself to the audience, boxes, pit, and galleries vied with each other in the manifestation of a sincere and hearty respect. The audience in the pit rose simultaneously, and received the veteran with loud cheering, while hats and handkerchiefs were waving in all directions. Mr. Munden advanced to the stage lights, and expressed his gratitude by repeatedly bowing, and placing his hand on his heart. He was affected even to tears; and he could not, for some time after the storm of applause had subsided, command his feelings sufficiently to proceed with his part. When, however, he resumed his self-collection, and rallied his scattered powers, he displayed as great a portion of rich, genuine, comic humour, as he had ever on any occasion delighted an audience with. He entered most happily into the whimsical spirit which distinguishes the eccentric baronet, and where his kind feelings are aroused by the contemplation of the possibility that his beloved nephew may, perhaps, fall in his rencontre with *Sir Charles Cropland*, his performance was truly pathetic. It was this versatility of talent which ranked Mr. Munden so high in his profession. Other men may excel

in a particular department, but he excelled in all. The humorous and good-natured, as well as the testy and querulous old gentleman,—the ancient lover,—the dupe of antiquarian credulity,—the feeling and affectionate father,—the drunken son of Crispin ;—all these characters, various and dissimilar as they are, found in him an admirable representative. He ran through the whole compass of comedy, and was everywhere original and everywhere successful. His closing performance did not at all derogate from his well-established fame. It was attended throughout with peals of laughter, and at its conclusion the applause was warm and long-continued. Mr. Elliston sustained the character of *Frederick Bramble* with an unusual degree of ease and vivacity. We have not seen this excellent actor to so much advantage for a considerable time. He was all life and animation. Mr. Knight's *Stephen Harrowby* and the *Ollapod* of Mr. Harley were exceedingly amusing. Mrs. W. West made a tolerably good *Emily Worthington*. The part of *Miss Lucretia*, that ' bit of nobility fallen into decay,' was performed with spirit by Mrs. Harlowe. The play was succeeded by Dibdin's farce of *Past Ten o' Clock*, in which Mr. Munden supported the character of Dozey with inimitable effect. In the tavern scene, he gave as a toast ' the health of old Joe Munden's friends.' This sally produced an immensity of applause. At the conclusion of the entertainments Mr. Munden came forward amidst shouts of approbation. His feelings for a time appeared to choke his utterance. He at length mustered up resolution, and, silence being obtained, he spoke as follows :—

* * * * * *

" During the delivery of this address Mr. Munden appeared to be most sensibly affected. The tears which flowed, in spite of all his efforts, and his broken and tremulous tones, showed, plainly enough, that *here* he was not acting. The scene was extremely impressive, and the effect produced on the audience was touchingly powerful. Every part of his farewell address was received with demonstrations of unfeigned regard.

At its conclusion, Mr. Munden retired amongst a number of his brother performers who were on the stage; but after the curtain had fallen he again came forward, bowed repeatedly to the audience, and then left the stage, leaning on the arm of Mr. Knight. Amongst the audience, which was almost unprecedently crowded, we observed many of the principal performers of the winter theatres."—*The Times newspaper, June* 1, 1824.

"As we last week stated, Mr. Munden took his leave of the public on Monday, at Drury Lane Theatre, in the character of *Sir Robert Bramble*, a part adapted by the masterly hand of Colman to his great and powerful talents; he never played it better; the performance was like a fine picture, the tints of which, so far from being injured, were only mellowed by time, and gave us not merely a sensation of regret that we were to lose such an actor, but that he had chosen to withdraw himself while yet in the meridian of his excellence."—*John Bull newspaper.*

MR. MUNDEN.

"The 31st of May will be long remembered in the annals of the stage; for on that day Munden quitted it for ever. His purpose was announced at the commencement of the season, but his energy was so unbroken, his spirits so fresh, and his humour so mellow, that we could scarcely believe he would fulfil it. He persevered, however, in his resolution, in spite of the remonstrances of his friends and the regrets of the public, and, after playing a few of his happiest parts, in his happiest manner, took his last leave at his benefit, before one of the most brilliant audiences which ever graced a theatre. The pit, the galleries, and the slips, were crowded almost to suffocation at the opening of the doors; the three circles of boxes were lined with elegantly dressed ladies, and the very lobbies were filled with a number of eager amateurs, who watched for the chance of catching one more glimpse of the old and true comedian whom they could never see again. He played Sir Robert Bramble in 'The Poor Gentleman,' and Dozey, in

'Past Ten o'clock,' as well, if not better, than he ever gave either of those masterpieces of comedy and farce; and, at the end, came forward and delivered the following modest and sensible address in a tremulous voice :—

'Ladies and Gentlemen,

'The moment is now arrived when I have to perform the painful duty of bidding you farewell. When I call to remembrance that five-and-thirty years have elapsed since I first had the honour of appearing before you, I am forcibly reminded that I ought to leave the scene for younger and gayer spirits to mingle in. But it is not easy to shake off in a moment the habits of years; and you will, I know, pardon me if I am tedious, since it is for the last time. I carry with me into private life the deep and indelible remembrance of that kind, that liberal indulgence with which you have at all times regarded my humble efforts to amuse. I feel that I am 'poor in thanks,' but your kindness is registered *here*, (laying his hand on his heart,) "and will never be forgotten. And should the recurrence of early association occasionally bring back the veteran comedian to your remembrance, he will ask for no higher fame. I thank you most sincerely, ladies and gentlemen, for the patience with which you have listened to me, and I now bid you a respectful, a grateful, and a last adieu.'

"This address was received with loud cheers and expressions of cordial sympathy and regret from all parts of the house. At its close, several of the chief actors in the company appeared on the stage to greet and support their friend, whose excellencies were appreciated by none more thoroughly than the members of his own profession. As the curtain was falling, he once more came forward to make his last bow, and close his honourable career, among the highest testimonies of esteem which the public can pay. They seemed to feel their incapacity to express their full sense of his powers, and we now feel inadequate to describe them.

"Mr. Munden was by far the greatest comedian we ever saw;

—his vein of humour was the richest and most peculiar; his range of character the most extensive; his discrimination the most exact and happy, and his finishing the most elaborate and complete. He received great advantages from nature, and improved them to the utmost by vigilant observation and laborious study. His power of face was the most extraordinary; for he had no singularity of feature—no lucky squint or mechanical grin; but the features which, when at rest, befitted well the sedate merchant or baronet of the old school, assumed, at his will, the strangest and the most fantastic forms. This almost creative faculty was associated with another power of an opposite kind—the capability of imparting to every variety of form a substance and apparent durability as if it were carved out of a rock. His action had no less body than flavour. In the wildest parts of farce he every minute put forth some living fantasy of his own, some new arrangement of features, creations among which Momus would have hesitated long which he should choose for his own proper use, as embodying most general traits of comic feeling. Any one of these hundred faces might serve as a model of a mask for the old Greek comedy; and looked as immovable while it lasted. And yet this marvellous power of spreading out before the eye the products of a rich comic imagination — this working out of breathing faces, which Aristophanes would have been pleased to gaze on, was set down as vulgar grimace by those who fancy the perfection of one excellence implies the absence of all others; and who will not be persuaded, even by their senses, that the same man can be Nipperkin and Dornton.

"Although Mr. Munden's humour and his flexibility of countenance were the gifts which chiefly distinguished him from others, he shared largely in that pathos which belongs in a greater or less degree to all true comedians. It is natural that a strong relish for the ludicrous should be accompanied by a genuine pathos, as both arise from quick sensibility to the peculiarities of our fellow-men, and the joys and sorrows by which they are affected. Those who are endowed with such

qualities, too often presume upon their strength, and rely on the individual effects which they can produce in their happiest moods. But Mr. Munden had a higher sense of the value of his art than to leave his success to accident, or to rest contented with doing something to make an audience laugh or weep without reference to the precise nature of the conception which he professed to embody. He studied his parts, in the best sense of the term, and with as careful and minute attention as though he were the driest and most mechanical of actors. When he had fully mastered the outlines of a part, he cast into it just so much of his resources of humour or of feeling as was necessary to give it genial life, and to discriminate its finest shades, and never enough to destroy its individuality, or melt down its distinctive features. In nothing did he more delightfully exhibit his skill than in the little sprinklings of humour which he threw into his sedater parts, endearing and familiarizing them to us, yet never allowing us to abate a jot of the respect or sympathy which they were intended to awaken. Thus, in his Old Dornton, the pleasantries scattered through the part always served to heighten the images of paternal love with which it was fraught,—as in the fond return to bid the profligate son 'Good night;' the interview with the Widow Warren; and the expression of pleasure on hearing the story of the tradesman, 'and so Harry has been your friend?' a little touch of familiar nature never exceeded on the stage. Those who had seen his face twisted into a thousand forms—all drunken in Nipperkin, all impudent in Crack, all chuckling wonder in Cockletop—might well be surprised, not so much to witness its decent gravity, but to find it just lighted up and twinkling with humour, just animated by a sense of the ludicrous, but never betraying an emotion inconsistent with the habits of the staid and wealthy banker. Great as his capacities were, he held them always in subservience to the requisitions of his author; and hence arose the uncommon variety and freshness of his characters. Hence also, it happened, that instead of falling off in age, as all actors

must do who play merely from impulse, he grew more perfect and mellow in time, and identified himself more closely with the persons whom he represented, the oftener he played them. He did not merely give a certain quantity of passion or humour, and think he had done enough; but he considered the exact kind of passion or humour to be displayed, colouring but not hiding the emotions of the heart by the habits of the life, and softening the oddities he pourtrayed by associating them with those common feelings to which they were most nearly allied. Thus his pathos in the duel scene of Sir Robert Bramble partook of the positiveness and argumentative tone of the part; while in Old Dornton it bordered on kindly dotage. We have seen him play three drunken parts in a night, and come out fresh in them all: and such was his practical discrimination, that we could not have transferred a tone or a stagger without injury to the inebriate sarcasms of Crack, the maudlin philanthropy of Nipperkin, or the sublime stupidity of Dozey! His expression of *wonder*, again, in which he greatly excelled, was as various as the occasion—from the wild amazement of the Cobbler of Preston at his grandeur, down to the delighted chuckle of Crack at the singular fact that 'some gentleman had left his liquor.' What a gallery of comic pictures might be copied from that one scene in 'The Poor Gentleman,' where the wayward baronet is taken for a bailiff—each look being in itself a study! What a succession of happy faces, all full of amazement, did he coin in Cockletop, as he expatiated over his imaginary treasures! What a planet-stricken air had he in Foresight, in 'Love for Love!' What intense astonishment, mixed with comic pleasure, in Sir Abel Handy, where the stranger calls to his termagant wife to follow, and the vixen obeys! How he stood lost in admiration, unconsciously mimicking the words, 'Come! come!' till he awoke to a full sense of his happiness, and danced about the stage, offering to make up a party to the Isle of Wight, or Jerusalem, or the Land's End! In his sailors—a class generally represented under very broad characteristics—there was

the same discrimination exhibited ; and his Mainmast differed from his Captain Bertram, and each from his Dozey, much more than the Shylock from the Hamlet of some successful tragedians. His Dozey, which was the last part he ever played, was perhaps the most extraordinary of all his personifications. This old tar—ignorant, stupified with age and grog—seemed absolutely grand in the robustness of his frame and the rolling self-satisfaction of his gait, as one who had out-braved 'a thousand storms, a thousand thunders.' It was indeed a triumph of art, when the old enthusiasm of this stout-hearted and thick-headed veteran was kindled up, and he gave his animated description of a battle, ending with the wave of his handkerchief for the English flag, and cheering with all the energy of youth : a more characteristic picture was never exhibited in the drollest farce ; nor was ever a truer or a nobler burst of feeling called forth in the stateliest tragedy.

"In retiring from the stage, while his power was undiminished, Mr. Munden acted consistently with the whole tenor of his life. It is a great sacrifice for an actor, who has been accustomed for many years to excite and to receive the sympathy of thousands, to retire for ever from their view. But that high sense of his art which enabled him to achieve so much, inspired him also to forego a pleasure which might possibly be purchased by the loss of a portion of his fame, or an inward consciousness that he was falling from the standard of excellence set up in his own mind. In all human probability he might have continued for several years to display undiminished excellence ; but sickness or accident might have prevented him from ending his career worthily ; and he determined to forestall them. He has chosen to depend at once on the grateful recollections of those whom he has delighted so long, and assuredly he will have his reward. May he long live to enjoy it!"—*New Monthly Magazine, for May*, 1824.

This criticism, as ingenious as it is eloquent, was attributed, at the time, to Mr. Tal-

fourd (now Mr. Serjeant Talfourd). The next bears intrinsic evidence of the quaint and pointed style of Charles Lamb.

MR. MUNDEN.

"The regular play-goers ought to put on mourning, for the king of broad comedy is dead to the drama! Alas!—Munden is no more!—'give sorrow vent!' He may yet walk the town—pace the pavement in a seeming existence—eat, drink, and nod to his friends in all the affectation of life—but Munden—*the* Munden!—Munden, with the bunch of countenances—the banquet of faces,—is gone for ever from the lamps; and, as far as comedy is concerned, is as dead as Garrick!—When an actor retires, (we will put the *suicide* as mild as possible,) how many worthy persons perish with him! with Munden,—Sir Peter Teazle must experience a shock—Sir Robert Bramble gives up the ghost; Crack ceases to breathe. Without Munden, what becomes of Dozey? Where shall we seek Jemmy Jumps?—Nipperkin, and a thousand of such admirable fooleries fall to nothing—and the departure, therefore, of such an actor as Munden—is a dramatic calamity.

"On the night that this inestimable humourist took farewell of the public, he also took his benefit:—a benefit in which the public assuredly did not participate!—The play was Colman's 'Poor Gentleman,' with Tom Dibdin's farce of 'Past Ten o'Clock.'—Reader, we all know Munden in Sir Robert Bramble, and old tobacco-complexioned Dozey;—we have all seen the old hearty baronet in his light sky-blue coat and genteel cocked hat; and we have all seen the weather-beaten old pensioner, dear old Dozey, tacking about the stage in that intenser blue sea-livery—drunk as heart could wish, and right valorous in memory. On this night Munden seemed, like the gladiator, 'to rally life's whole energies to die;' and, as we were present at this great display of his powers, and, as this will be the last opportunity that will ever be afforded us to speak of this admirable performer, we shall 'consecrate,' as old John Buncle says, 'a paragraph to him.'

"The house was full:—*full!* pshaw! that 's an empty word!—The house was stuffed—crammed with people,—crammed from the swing-door of the pit to the back seat in the banished *one shilling*. A quart of audience may be said (vintner-like may it be said) to have been squeezed into a pint of theatre. Every hearty play-going Londoner, who remembered Munden years agone, mustered up his courage and his money for this benefit—and middle-aged people were, therefore, by no means scarce. The comedy chosen for the occasion, is one that travels a long way without a guard;—it is not until the third or fourth act, we rather think, that Sir Robert Bramble appears on the stage. When he entered, his reception was earnest,—noisy,—outrageous,—waving of hats and handkerchiefs;—deafening shouts;—clamorous beating of sticks;—all the various ways in which the heart is accustomed to manifest its joy were had recourse to on this occasion. Mrs. Bamfield worked away with a sixpenny fan till she scudded only under bare poles. Mr. Whittington wore out the ferule of a new nine-and-sixpenny umbrella. Gratitude did great damage on the joyful occasion.

"The old performer,—the veteran, as he appropriately called himself in the farewell speech,—was plainly overcome; he pressed his hands together—he planted one solidly on his breast—he bowed—he sidled—he cried!—When the noise subsided (which it invariably does at last), the comedy proceeded—and Munden gave an admirable picture of the rich, eccentric, charitable old bachelor baronet.

"In the farce he became richer and richer. Old Dozey is a plant from Greenwich. The bronzed face—and neck to match—the long curtain of a coat—the straggling white hair,—the propensity, the determined attachment to grog—are all from Greenwich. Munden, as Dozey, seems never to have been out of action, sun, and drink.—He looks (alas! he *looked*) fire-proof. His face and throat were dried like a raisin—and his legs walked under the rum-and-water with all the indecision which that inestimable beverage usually inspires. It is

truly tacking, not walking. He *steers* at a table, and the tide of grog now and then bears him off the point. On this night he seemed to us to be doomed to fall in action, and we, therefore, looked at him, as some of the Victory's crew are said to have gazed upon Nelson, with a consciousness that his ardour and his uniform were worn for the last time.—In the scene where Dozey describes a sea-fight, the actor never was greater, and he seemed the personification of an old seventy-four!—His coat hung like a flag at his poop!—His phiz was not a whit less highly coloured than one of those lustrous visages that generally superintend the head of a ship!—There was something cumbrous, indecisive, and awful in his veerings!—Once afloat, it appeared impossible for him to come to his moorings;—once at anchor, it did not seem an easy thing to get him under weigh!" —*London Magazine*, May, 1824.

### Drury Lane.

"On Monday evening, Colman's comedy of the 'Poor Gentleman' was performed for Mr. Munden's benefit; and, as this was announced to be his last appearance, we were not at all surprised to find that the theatre was crowded to suffocation, and to learn that hundreds who were anxious to take a farewell look at this inimitable comedian, had been sent away from the doors disappointed and defeated of their purpose. After enjoying a large portion of the public favour for four-and-thirty years—after having, during the whole of that period, revelled in their smiles, and been cheered by their applauses, the consciousness that he was meeting his friends and patrons for the last time, and that after this night the gladdening sounds that had so often reached his ears would never visit them again, must have excited in him feelings, of the intensity of which no man but an actor can form a just estimate; and it is no wonder, therefore, that both at his entrance and his retirement he was completely overpowered, and that tears alone should have afforded him relief. To do justice to Mr. Mun-

den's talents in his profession is no easy task. He was the most indefatigable actor we ever saw. He did not trust upon occasions to his acknowledged popularity, to the high esteem in which he was held by the public, or to the humour which his fine countenance displayed to get him through a part, but he studied attentively every line and every word that was set down for him; and his dramatic portraits were not only distinct and separate from each other, but were all of them finely touched and most exquisitely finished. To speak only of a few of his favourite characters, we would recall to mind the variety he always displayed in his assumptions of old age. What could be more varied than the different manners which marked his Sir Peter Teazle, his Old Dornton, and his Sir Francis Gripe? The gentlemanly deportment, the freedom from suspicion, the boundless confidence of the first; the pathos, the overflowings of paternal tenderness, of affection for his son, almost degenerating into a crime, of the second; even the cunning usurious expression, and amorous propensities, of the third. Look at the difference between his Polonius and his Peachum: the former bearing the stamp of true nobility, —exhibiting what was once a capacious mind giving way gradually before the encroachments of infirmity and age; and the latter, sordid, avaricious, hardened in guilt, and subsisting upon the vices of his fellow-creatures. What shall we say of his representation of the naval character? Where can we find three personations more distinct than his three sailors of different kinds,—his Dozey, his Mainmast, and his Captain Bertram? Do they in the slightest degree resemble one another? or, rather, is not each a distinct species in itself? And last, although not least, when shall we find his equal in such parts as Cockletop, Nipperkin, and Crack? Other actors have appeared in more than one line of character, and other actors have amused us with the breadth and richness of their humour; but we have no recollection of any actor in our times, who has exhibited so much variety of talent, and in whom that variety has been so thoroughly and satisfactorily displayed. He

always practised his art as if he loved it ; and his great delight was to do his utmost and his best, both for his author and his audience. The curtain, however, has now shut him from our view, and we are reluctantly compelled to take our leave of him. The good sense he has always shown through life, accompanies him in his retirement. He is too wise to remain upon the stage until 'his waning lamp lacks oil,' and thus become the 'scoff of younger spirits;' but he retires in the plenitude of his powers, and the full enjoyment of his brilliant talents. Farewell, then, thou favoured of Thalia! thou, with whom our earliest dramatic pleasures are associated and connected ; long mayest thou enjoy the fruits of thy honest industry ; long mayest thou be cherished, as thou well deservest to be, by thy companions and thy friends.

"'So may'st thou live till, like fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly plucked, for death mature.'"

—*Literary Gazette.*

ON THE DOGBERRY OF MUNDEN, FROM A MS. BY HAZLITT.

"The comedy of 'Much Ado about Nothing' has not been much acted of late years. Whether this arises from any thing in the progress of taste, or from the decay of the stage, and the want of actors to give effect to the characters, we shall not pretend to determine. There is at least one character in this play (and that not the least important) which is still well and efficiently performed. Dogberry is a character suited to the genius of Mr. Munden : nor can we here help expressing an opinion, that if this very original and whimsical performer had been oftener put into the comic characters of Shakespeare, and less confined to those of modern farce, his reputation as an actor would have stood even higher than it does at present. For he is not a mere mimic or caricaturist of what he sees ; but he carries his imagination along with him into the unknown regions of absurdity, unfolds the slenderest verbal con-

ceit by a portentous breadth of visage; makes a jest where there is none, by standing aghast at his own want of apprehension; and may be considered as a very unaccountable hieroglyphic of the profoundest *no meaning*. His face is a riddle; and his voice naturally gabbles contradictions, and flounders into evasions. His Dogberry is two centuries old; and we should hope that his name will live two centuries more, that posterity may pay off the debt of gratitude owing to him by his cotemporaries!"

In turning over the pages wherein we have noticed the rise and departure of the most celebrated performers who shed a lustre over the close of the last, and first quarter of the present century, we read with a melancholy curiosity the long catalogue of names,—all famous in their day,—most of whom have disappeared from the stage of life, and not one of whom will again appear on that stage, the peculiar sphere of their brightness:

"Like the lost Pleiad, seen no more below."

Shuter, Yates, Parsons, Edwin, Quick, Suett, Wilson, (Miss) Young, (Miss) Farren, John Palmer, Crawford, Abington, Smith, Lewis, Mattocks, Cooke, Siddons, Jordan, O'Neil, Bannister, Incledon, Johnstone, Emery, and Kemble have departed from us in succession. Few of the earlier names in this extended list are known to the present generation but by report:—the fame of their immediate successors is fast fading into oblivion: to the next generation the echo of *their* fame will scarcely be audible; and to that common oblivion will

be consigned the memory of their cotemporary, and, in some instances, their successful rival —Joseph Munden.

The reader will reasonably expect to be informed what became of the man who had filled so large a space in the public vision, now that he had ceased to have a public existence—what were his habits, his amusements in early and in after life; and the whole history of the eight years which elapsed from the date of his retirement from the stage, until he yielded up his mortal being. In the very nature of things it is impossible to furnish much information on such a subject. Actors "come like shadows, so depart;" they are nothing if not acting: on them, whilst on the stage,

> "the public gaze
> Is fixed for ever to detract or praise."

But with the mass of their audience they have only a scenic existence, and are better known as the admired Hamlet, Richard, and Dr. Cantwell of the day, than as Mr. Kemble, Mr. Kean, or Mr. Dowton. Of Munden little more can be said than that, to borrow Mr. Lamb's language, "he walked the town, paced the pavement, ate, drank, and nodded to his friends." His infirmities prevented him from mixing much in society; latterly, they confined him, for months together, to his bed, and almost always to his room. He was accustomed, when health permitted, to pass some

time in the summer season, in Wiltshire, with his kind daughter Alice, who, as well as her husband and his relatives, did every thing to contribute to her father's comfort. After her death he rarely left his home. His chief amusement was skimming over the newspapers—indeed he read nothing else: we doubt whether he had ever in his life-time read a book throughout, excepting a play-book. The quantity of matter he had been required to study, when engaged in his profession, and to repeat, occasionally with short notice, and at intervals, made him averse from burthening his memory with any subject foreign to his pursuits. But that memory was very retentive; and, largely as he had mixed in society, it was not surprising that he had amassed a deal of information. The ambition of attaining excellence, which had raised him to so high a rank in his profession, rendered him careful not to forfeit it by an error in pronunciation or defective emphasis, and his good sense suggested the means of information. He was punctual at rehearsals. In his early days rehearsals were held frequently, both of new plays and revivals; and in cases where much was expected from the performance, it was not unusual to have a dress rehearsal. Mr. Harris, who prided himself upon the perfect manner in which his Christmas pantomimes (great sources of emolument) were brought forward,

always had them represented in his presence, before they were submitted to an audience.

At a later period, a comedy was sometimes read in the green room one day, rehearsed the next day, and played the day after. The performers came upon the scene as if they had never seen each other before, each intent upon his particular part only; and hence that perfect grouping, and harmony of action, the effect of which the public, without being aware of the preparation, had formerly so admired, was totally lost sight of. Munden was most attentive to his stage engagements; we remember but one instance in which he was absent when wanted, with the exception, of course, of actual illness—sham illnesses he disdained to resort to. On the occasion in question he was advertised in two farces, and they were represented in an order different from that in which they were printed in the bill of the preceding day. He explained to the satisfaction of the audience that as he resided out of town, and had not been apprised of the change in the representation, he had come to the theatre at the precise hour when he thought his services were required. He seldom needed the prompter, and was never imperfect. The critics are right in assuming that he studied deeply and carefully. He was, unless engaged at rehearsal, a late riser, and meditated for hours in bed. He repeated his

new parts to his wife, in whose judgment he placed a deserved confidence, and who, being a diligent reader, was of service to him by her knowledge of books. If Munden had not recourse to authors, except dramatic, he had little inclination to take up the pen himself. He wrote only letters upon business, and as few as needful; but he expressed his meaning clearly, with terseness and propriety. It has been noticed that he wrote a very fine hand, and till within a few years of his death his signature was firm and neat. He was not fond of parting with his money; and, when the difficulty he had experienced in acquiring it is taken into consideration, it is not surprising that he should have retained it with a strong hold. Strange to say, he once lent Tom Dibdin an hundred pounds, and stranger still, Tom repaid the sum. Munden lived in no golden days. When he was a young actor, his salary was low, and the habits of the society in which he mixed were convivial and expensive. He began by spending, and ended with hoarding. Few of us can avoid extremes, and, if the truth must be told, the final result was—parsimony. Many humorous stories are told of his addiction to this "good old gentlemanly vice:"—the best is that, after he quitted the stage, meeting an old acquaintance, he was solicited to bestow upon his admirer some relic of so great an actor: he is represented

to have gravely tendered his old cotton umbrella in exchange for the handsome silk one of his enthusiastic friend. This was told by the late Mr. Yates, in one of his entertainments, with an imitation of the actor's peculiar manner. Munden was very wroth, and would not speak to Yates, denying the fact; whether it was true or not is of little consequence, since it is a good story; and in such cases one is not disposed to say *magis amica veritas*. This same umbrella was exhibited in a painting of the green room, we think, by Sharp, wherein the performers are represented in their private dresses at rehearsal. The likeness of Munden is a good one, and that of his umbrella—perfect. It was not like "Mr. Whittington's, a new nine-and-sixpenny umbrella," but an old five-and-sixpenny, with the thin whale-bones bent from their position; and when the writer looked at the picture he would have made affidavit to the umbrella's identity. Still, though Munden was near, he was very honest. He payed slowly, but he paid surely; and the debts, remaining at his death, were comparatively trifling. For another story, which is well told, we suspect he was indebted to Mr. Leigh Hunt. It is likely enough to be true, for he was fond of good eating, though he did not keep a very luxurious table at home.

The heart and the stomach seem to have had fair play in Munden. A gentleman told us, some years ago, that he was on board an Indiaman, when Munden came into the vessel to meet a son, whom he had not seen for a long time, and who was expected every moment up the river. There happened to be no better refreshment to set before him than hung beef, which he sat down to and eat heartily, exclaiming every moment with the emphasis of his stage accent: "Excellent hung beef!" Meantime his son comes up the river, and is descried by Munden, who getting up, still eating the beef (which had been served to him on deck) cries out, between eating and weeping, "My boy! my dear boy!"

**The paper (The Plain Dealer) whence we have extracted the above anecdote, contains a description of Munden's manner and features late in life which is correct and characteristic.**

The only time we ever met him, which was at the house of an acquaintance, we had not been in the room with him two minutes before he gave us an amusing instance of the reality of his impressions, and the way in which fact and fiction were identified in him, or rather his stage life and his other life, if other it could be called. This is the case indeed with most actors, as it well may be, their stage existence being a thing so much more vivid and applauded than what they share in common with other men. We told him that the last time we had the pleasure of seeing him, was in the character of one of the clowns in the *Recruiting Sergeant;* but that we did not recollect the name: upon which, though it was only last summer, and he had just been telling us of his age and infirmities, he jumped up from his seat, and throwing himself into the clown's attitude, exclaimed, with all his stage face and manner, "Costar Pearmain!" Before dinner, our host issuing

forth to show us his grounds, the old man was so lively, that he must needs deprive him of the office of master of the ceremonies; and though he could not go down the garden steps without help, and ought to have been wheeled about in a chair, which was at hand for him, he accompanied us to this spot and to that, pointing out the beauties of the prospect, and working himself up into such a state of enjoyment, that our friend thought proper to use a little hospitable compulsion, and force him into the chair. When he got in doors he talked of the stage all the evening,* and evidently had no other idea in his head, though he willingly listened to any thing that others said, and occasionally gave a faint grin, or a livelier twist of his eye-brows; and now and then he puffed a little in the manner above described (like a man trying his pipe): and he was always ready to wonder.

It was fine to see astonishment not burnt out of him, at so late a period in life. He understood a good dish, and manège of a saddle of mutton; and he drank his wine pretty freely "considering." Gout helped to shorten his life; yet he lived to a good age; and what are actors to do in their retirement, after being used to a life of excitement? Somebody at dinner speaking of the extravagant expenditure of George the Fourth and his brother the Duke of York, Munden said, with unaffected solemnity of countenance, that he understood they "never could learn the value of money." His profile was not good, when he looked grave. There was something close, carking, and even severe in it; but it was redeemed by his

---

* He did so, no doubt, in deference to Mr. Hunt's literary reputation and knowledge of theatrical matters; but there was no subject on which Munden was more averse from conversing in ordinary society than the stage. If any one commenced a conversation on acting, he generally shut his mouth; for, like Mr. Kean, he complained that the remarks he usually heard on such occasions were "d — d nonsense."

front face, which was handsome for one so old, and singularly pliable about the eyes and brows. He repeated, with good emphasis and discretion, a speech full of advice and good sense, which Polonius addressed to his son when setting out on his travels; and regretted, with laudable self-love, and, indeed, with good taste (for it is only one of Shakespeare's just varieties of character), that it is left out in the representation.

Munden began, as we have before stated, to save rather late in life; yet the passion for accumulation enabled him to amass a handsome fortune—a considerable portion of which was invested in the five per cents. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer reduced that fund to another, bearing a lower interest, Munden submitted to be paid off. The plethora of money, which enabled the minister to make that reduction, drove a great deal of British capital into foreign *securities* (so called, by courtesy), and many wild schemes abroad and at home. Munden's timidity saved him from embarking in adventures abroad; but he could not resist the high interest which the speculators in building, at home, offered. One of those sagacious persons, possessing more than building craft, affixed, as a lure, "Munden Terrace," to a row of houses in the Hammersmith Road; but the retired actor was insensible to vanity when his pocket was concerned; so he enjoyed the immortality without the expense. To another person, however, he was induced to advance a considerable sum of

money, by way of mortgage, on houses at Islington. He was thoroughly ignorant of business himself, and had not experienced advisers. He advanced more than the value of the property—the builder failed—Munden was obliged to foreclose his mortgages—and thus became, what he never intended to be, the actual proprietor of the bricks and mortar. By this necessity, he lost about two-fifths of his advances; but that was not the only irritating circumstance. The houses had been built to sell, and our unlucky actor was obliged to put them in substantial repair, which he did in the most expensive way. Being only second or third rates they could not be let on lease, and were most of them occupied by needy tenants from year to year. These tenants calculated on living rent free, by letting lodgings; and, to enable them to do so, wanted their rent laid out in mere embellishment. When Munden, therefore, whose amusement it was to calculate his hoards beforehand, counted upon Mr. A. or Mr. B.'s quarter becoming due, they either could not pay, or, if they did, considered that they conferred the money as a kind of boon, to be laid out for their advantage. "They expect me," said Munden, "to let them have the houses for nothing, and to put a pipe of wine in the cellar into the bargain." The extravagant requisitions they made, either by themselves

or their wives—who were more unreasonable, and more difficult to be answered—would have been amusing to a man of business, who would speedily have got rid of such harpies, or of the property; but in Munden's case it was a serious annoyance, for he was chained by the leg to his bed side, dreaded the vision of an empty house, and the whole host of auctioneers and agents. Petty as these annoyances may seem, they certainly had the effect of shortening his life; for he brooded over them, until his sensibilities became morbid. Still he had enough of money, and more than enough. What might have been added to his fortune, had he lived in these palmy times, or crossed the Atlantic, it is impossible to conjecture. He sometimes talked of visiting the United States. He had a heavy insurance on his life at the Equitable, and might have thought that an impediment; but the Insurance Company had always given him permission to go over to Ireland, on paying an extra premium, and the remuneration would have been amply sufficient to defray any additional expense. Possibly his constitutional disease ran in his remembrance, and rendered him nervous, as he had never been abroad. There can be no doubt that he would have been very popular in America. Hodgkinson and Bernard had met with great success. Bernard, who had been at Covent-Garden, and quitted England

at the time of Munden's first triumphs, returned to see the last of him. They were both sound actors, but not equal to Munden, nor in his line; nothing that approached to him in comedy or farce had ever reached the American shores. The breadth of his acting would have told with our transatlantic brethren; and nobody could discern the taste of his audience sooner than Munden. The reputation of a quarter of a century would have preceded him; and, if he had played there as well as he did the last night he appeared in London, he would not have derogated from that high reputation.

Other offers were made to Munden. One to take leave in Dublin (he had taken a formal leave at Liverpool), through the instrumentality of the author of "Folly as it Flies," "The Dramatist," &c.

My dear Munden,

The bearer of this letter is Mr. B——, agent to Mr. Abbott, of Dublin, who wishes you to take leave of your Irish admirers; and play three weeks, to commence on June 19th next. Now forget the gout (as I do), and be "the bold thunder."

Very truly yours,

T. Reynolds.

Warren-street, Saturday.

It was also suggested to him, in Dec., 1825, by a gentleman connected with the Drury-Lane property, that his retirement, like that

of Mr. Johnstone, had been premature; and he was pressed to return to the London stage. His answer is a very sensible one:—

Dear Sir,

I received yours, and felt much flattered by your request that I should once more appear on the boards of Drury-Lane Theatre; but having taken leave of the public in so marked a manner when I quitted, it is impossible, consistently, to put on the sock again,—added to which, I have such frequent attacks of gout that no dependence could be placed on me. I have been confined these six weeks, and am unable at this moment to quit my bed.

Yours truly,

Jos. S. Munden.

If he ever entertained the idea for a moment, it must have been in conversation with Mr. Stephen Price. Mr. Price writes thus:—

T. R. D. L. July 16, 1826.

My dear Sir,

Since I last had the pleasure of writing to you a change has taken place in Drury's concerns, and it has come into my hands as sole lessee. Now, have the goodness to say, will you oblige me by opening the theatre for me, and performing thirty nights during the season, for which I am perfectly willing to accede to the terms you suggested—10*l.* per night, a benefit on a Monday in May, and two double orders. Your early answer will oblige me, as I leave town on Thursday.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

Stephen Price.

It appears that Munden declined the en-

gagement, and an offer from Mr. Dunn, who was empowered, on the part of Mr. Price, to increase the terms to 15*l.* per night, for thirty nights. We doubt whether he ever had any serious thought of returning to the stage, though he might have suggested the terms hypothetically.

Munden's debility now began to increase rapidly. He rose only to take his dinner, and retired very early to bed. He had always, when he was on the stage, partaken freely of wine; but, latterly, he abstained from it entirely, and denied himself those comforts which his age required, and his situation in life enabled him to afford. He was attended diligently and affectionately by his wife, who, though older than himself, cheerfully endured many privations to which his disease—for it *was* a disease—of penuriousness subjected her. We wish we could add that he bequeathed to her (she survived him) a larger sum than the trifling annuity of one hundred pounds for the term of her life. Upon the other dispositions of his will, which was made two-and-twenty years previous to his death, with occasional codicils, we do not desire to enter, and they would not interest the reader. About the end of January, 1832, he suffered under a derangement of the bowels, for which he took his own remedy, and increased the malady, being unable to retain any nutriment on his stomach.

He sent, when too late, for Mr. Robarts, of Great Coram-street, Brunswick-square, who knew his constitution, and on whose ability and experience he had the most perfect reliance. The eminent physicians, Dr. Roots and Dr. Bright, also attended; and every thing which medical skill could effect was tried, but in vain. He sank beneath a gradual decay of nature on the 6th February, and was buried in the vaults of St. George's, Bloomsbury, where the remains of his widow were deposited five years afterwards. The death of Munden is thus announced in the daily papers, all of which contain feeling and flattering allusions to his public and private life. From these accounts we will only extract Mr. Charles Lamb's (himself, alas! now no more) letter to the editor of the *Athenæum*, with the elegant passage subjoined, which, we presume, bears the initials of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd:—

DIED.

"On the 6th inst., at his house in Bernard-street, Russell-square, in the 74th year of his age, Joseph Shepherd Munden, Esq., formerly of the Theatres Royal, Covent-Garden and Drury-Lane."

THE ATHENÆUM.

MUNDEN, THE COMEDIAN.

A brief memoir in a paper like the "Athenæum," is due to departed genius, and would certainly have been paid to Mun-

den, whose fame is so interwoven with all our early and pleasant recollections, even though we had nothing to add to the poor detail of dates and facts already registered in the daily papers. The memory of a player, it has been said, is limited to one generation; he—

> "struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more!"

But this cannot be true, seeing that many whose fame will be counted by centuries, yet live to delight us in Cibber; and that others, of our latter days, have been embalmed, in all their vital spirit, by Elia himself; in whose unrivalled volume Cockletop is preserved as in amber, and where Munden will live for aye, making mouths at time and oblivion. We were thus apologising to ourselves for the unworthy epitaph we were about to scratch on perishable paper to this inimitable actor, when we received the following letter, which our readers will agree with us is worth a whole volume of bald biographies:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ATHENÆUM.

Dear Sir,

Your communication to me of the death of Munden made me weep. Now, Sir, I am not of the melting mood; but in these serious times, the loss of half the world's fun is no trivial deprivation. It was my loss (or *gain* shall I call it?) in the early time of my play-going, to have missed all Munden's acting. There was only he and Lewis at Covent Garden, while Drury Lane was exuberant with Parsons, Dodd, &c.; such a comic company, as I suppose, the stage never showed. Thence, in the evening of my life, I had Munden all to myself, more mellowed, richer, perhaps, than ever. I cannot say what his change of faces produced in me. It was not acting. He was not one of my "old actors." It might be better. His power was extravagant. I saw him one evening in three drunken characters. Three farces were played. One part

was Dozey; I forget the rest; but they were so discriminated, that a stranger might have seen them all, and not have dreamed that he was seeing the same actor. I am jealous for the actors who pleased my youth. He was not a Parsons or a Dodd, but he was more wonderful. He seemed as if he could do any thing. He was not an actor; but something *better*, if you please. Shall I instance Old Foresight, in "Love for Love," in which Parsons was at once the old man, the astrologer, &c. Munden dropped the old man, the doater, which makes the character; but he substituted for it a moon-struck character: a perfect abstraction from this earth, that looked as if he had newly come down from the planets. Now, *that* is not what I call *acting*. It might be better; He was imaginative; he could impress upon an audience an *idea;*—the low one, perhaps, of leg of mutton and turnips; but such was the grandeur and singleness of his expressions, that that single expression would convey to all his auditory a notion of all the pleasures they had all received from all the *legs of mutton and turnips* they have ever eaten in their lives. Now, this is not *acting;* nor do I set down Munden amongst my old actors. He was only a wonderful man, exerting his vivid impressions through the agency of the stage. In one thing did I see him *act;* that is, support a character; it was in a wretched farce, called "Johnny Gilpin," for Dowton's benefit, in which he did a cockney; the thing ran but one night; but when I say that Liston's Lubin Log was nothing to it, I say little; it was transcendant. And here, let me say of actors—*envious* actors, that of *Munden*, Liston was used to speak, almost with the enthusiasm due to the dead, in terms of such allowed superiority to every actor on the stage; and this at a time when Munden was gone by in the world's estimation, that it convinced me that *artists* (in which term I include poets, painters, &c.,) are not so envious as the world think. I have little time, and therefore enclose a criticism on Munden's Old Dozey and his general acting, by a gentleman, who attends less to

these things than formerly, but whose criticism I think masterly. C. Lamb.

Mr. Munden appears to us to be the most *classical* of actors. He is that in high farce, which Kemble was in high tragedy. The lines of these great artists are, it must be admitted, sufficiently distinct; but the same elements are in both; the same directness of purpose, the same singleness of aim, the same concentration of power, the same iron casing of inflexible manner, the same statue-like precision of gesture, movement, and attitude. The hero of farce is as little affected with impulses from without, as the retired prince of tragedians. There is something solid, sterling, almost adamantine, in the building up of his grotesque characters. When he fixes his wonder-working face in any of its most amazing varieties, it looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock, by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever. It is like what we can imagine a mask of the old Grecian comedy to have been; only that it lives, and breathes, and changes. His most fantastical gestures are the grand ideal of farce. He seems as though he belonged to the earliest and the stateliest age of comedy, when instead of superficial foibles and the airy varieties of fashion, she had the grand asperities of man to work on; when her grotesque images had something romantic about them; and when humour and parody were themselves heroic. His expressions of feeling and bursts of enthusiasm are among the most genuine which we have ever felt. They seem to come up from a depth of emotion in the heart, and burst through the sturdy casing of manner, with a strength which seems increased ten-fold by its real and hearty obstacle. The workings of his spirit seem to expand his frame, till we can scarcely believe that by measure it is small; for the space which he fills in the imagination is so real, that we almost mistake it for that of corporal dimensions. His Old Dozey, in the excellent farce of "Past Ten o'Clock," is his grandest effort of this kind—and we know of nothing finer. He seems

to have "a heart of oak" indeed. His description of a sea-fight is the most noble and triumphant piece of enthusiasm which we remember. It is as if the spirits of a whole crew of nameless heroes "were swelling in his bosom." We never felt so ardent and proud a sympathy with the valour of England as when we heard it. May health long be his, thus to do our hearts good; for we never saw any actor whose merits have the least resemblance to his, even in species: and when his genius is withdrawn from the stage, we shall not have left even a term by which we can fitly describe it. T. N. T.

We here terminate the "Life of Munden." It is unnecessary to add to the detailed and discriminative criticisms on his performances as an actor, which are republished in this volume: still more unnecessary, and much more indelicate would it be in the writer to allude further to him as a man. We are willing to accept as his due the praise bestowed upon him by one of his admirers. "When we reflect on the sufferings he experienced in his youth, we shall not wonder at his placing a high value on money in his latter years. Every man has some failing, and this is said to have been Munden's; but cast into the opposite balance his integrity through life, his parental affection, and the temptations he resisted, which will preponderate? As Johnson said of Macklin, "Divide the world into the good and the bad, and he will stand high in the better half."*

* See the New Times newspaper, June 1, 1824.

A List of the Characters, which Munden performed :—of those marked * he was the original representative.

| | |
|---|---|
| Faddle | *Oaks. |
| Sir Francis Gripe | Busy Body. |
| Jemmy Jumps | Farmer. |
| Don Lewis | Love makes a Man. |
| Darby | Poor Soldier. |
| Quidnunc | Upholsterer. |
| Sir Samuel Sheepy | *School for Arrogance. |
| Lazarillo | Two Strings to your Bow. |
| Frank | *Modern Antiques. |
| Lovel | High Life Below Stairs. |
| Ephraim Smooth | *Wild Oats. |
| Cassander | Alexander the Little. |
| Pedrillo | Castle of Andalusia. |
| Daphne | Midas Revived. |
| Tipple | Flitch of Bacon. |
| Camillo | Double Falsehood. |
| Ennui | Dramatist. |
| Gentleman Usher | King Lear. |
| Lord Jargon | *Notoriety. |
| First Carrier | Henry the Fourth. |
| Mustapha | *Day in Turkey. |
| Second Witch | Macbeth. |
| Meadows | Deaf Lover. |
| Sebastian | Midnight Hour. |
| Old Dornton | *Road to Ruin. |
| Nicholas | Fashionable Levities. |
| Old Shepherd | Peep behind the Curtains. |
| Aircastle | Cozengers. |
| David | Rivals. |
| Autolycus | Winter's Tale. |
| Tailor | Catherine and Petruchio. |
| Peregrine Forester | *Hartford Bridge. |
| Sir Anthony Absolute | Rivals. |
| Bribon | *Columbus. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Francis Wronghead . | Provoked Husband. |
| Polonius . . . . | Hamlet. |
| Hardcastle . . . . | She Stoops to Conquer. |
| Don Jerome . . . | Duenna. |
| Harmony . . . . | *Every one has his Fault. |
| Costar Pearmain . . | Recruiting Officer. |
| Sir Thomas Roundhead . | *How to grow Rich. |
| Dozey . . . . | May Day. |
| Nipperkin . . . | *Sprigs of Laurel. |
| Dromio of Syracuse . . | Comedy of Errors. |
| Town Clerk . . . . | Much ado about Nothing. |
| Peachum . . . . | Beggars' Opera. |
| Puzzle . . . . . | Funeral. |
| Old Groveboy . . . | Maid of the Oaks. |
| Jolly Boy . . . . | *World in a Village. |
| Sir Andrew Acid . . | *Notoriety. |
| General Savage . . | School for Wives. |
| Craig Campbell . . . | *Love's Frailties. |
| Sidney . . . . . | *Travellers in Switzerland. |
| Russet . . . . | Jealous Wife. |
| Oakland . . . . | *Netley Abbey. |
| Trim . . . . . | Tristam Shandy. |
| Old Pranks . . . | London Hermit. |
| Lopez . . . . | Lovers' Quarrels. |
| Scrub . . . . . | Beaux Stratagem. |
| Flush . . . . . | *Rage. |
| Midas . . . . . | Midas. |
| Cimberton . . . . | Fashionable Lovers. |
| Humphrey . . . . | *Town before you. |
| Tallyho . . . . | Fontainbleau. |
| Valoury . . . . | *Mysteries of the Castle. |
| Sir Hans Burgess . . | *Life's Vagaries. |
| Cypress . . . . . | *Irish Mimic. |
| Donald . . . . . | *Deserted Daughter. |
| Doiley . . . . . | Who 's the Dupe. |
| Fool . . . . . | Battle of Hexham. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Don Cæsar | Bold Stroke for a Husband. |
| Drugget | Three Weeks after Marriage. |
| Thomas | Irish Widow. |
| Lord Scratch | Dramatist. |
| Grumio. | Catherine and Petruchio. |
| Sir Walter Waring | Woodman. |
| Dorus | Cymon. |
| Spado | Castle of Andalusia. |
| Governor Harcourt | Chapter of Accidents. |
| General | Midnight Hour. |
| Shelty | Highland Reel. |
| Tokay | Wives Revenged. |
| Project | *Speculation. |
| Grub. | Cross Purposes. |
| Caustic | *Way to get Married. |
| Brumagem | *Lock and Key. |
| Antonio | Follies of a Day. |
| Harry | Maid of the Oaks. |
| Zamo | Zorinsky. |
| Sir Hornet Armstrong | Mark'd Friend. |
| Grog | Positive Man. |
| Captain Cape | Old Maid. |
| Dowdle | Prisoner at Large. |
| Old Testy | *Abroad and at Home. |
| Sir Charles Clackit | Guardian. |
| Old Rapid | *Cure for the Heart-ache. |
| Sir William Dorillon | *Wives as they were. |
| Timothy Peascod | What d'ye call it? |
| Obadiah | *Honest Thieves. |
| Robin | Waterman. |
| Tony Lumpkin | She Stoops to Conquer. |
| Zekiel Homespun | *Heir at Law. |
| Clod | *Young Quaker. |
| Corney | Beggar on Horseback. |
| Perriwinkle | Bold Stroke for a Wife. |
| Dogberry | Much ado about Nothing. |

Sir Harry Sycamore .
Sir Wilford Witwood . .
Simon Single . . . *False Impressions.
Undermine . . . *Secrets worth Knowing.
Sir Peter Teazle . . School for Scandal.
Dennison . . . . *Blue Devils.
Sir Christopher Curry . Inkle and Yarico.
Colonel Oldboy . . . Lionel and Clarissa.
Justice Clement . . Every man in his humour.
Justice Woodcock . . Love in a Village.
Sir Luke Tremor . . Such things are.
Shenkin . . . . *Cambro Britons.
Count Benini . . . False and True.
Acres . . . . Rivals.
Little John . . . Robin Hood.
Verdun . . . . *Lovers Vows.
Challinger . . . *Ramah Droog.
Bonus . . . . *Laugh when you can.
Oakworth . . . . *Votary of Wealth.
Captain Bertram . . *Birthday.
Cuno . . . . . *Count of Burgundy.
Cranky . . . . Son-in-Law.
King Arthur . . . Tom Thumb.
Vulcan . . . . Poor Vulcan.
Alibi . . . . . Lie of the Day.
Launcelot Gobbo . . Merchant of Venice.
Worry . . . . *Management.
Crack . . . . *Turnpike Gate.
Ava Thoanoa . . . *Wise Man of the East.
Wolf . . . . *Joanna.
Sir Abel Handy . . . *Speed the Plough.
Hardy . . . . Belle's Stratagem.
Croaker . . . . Good-natured Man.
Gauge . . . . Camp.
Sir Fretful Plagiary . . Critic.
Dominique . . . *Paul and Virginia.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir Buzzard Savage | Fashionable Levities. |
| Primitive | *Life. |
| Brainworm | Every man in his humour. |
| Old Liberal | *School for Prejudice. |
| Sir Robert Bramble | *Poor Gentleman. |
| Marrall | New way to pay old Debts. |
| Ben Block | Reprisal. |
| Alderman Indigo | *Sea-side Story. |
| Malvolio | Love's Labours Lost. |
| Peter Post Obit | *Folly as it Flies. |
| Peter | *Cabinet. |
| Old Philpot | Citizen. |
| Sapling | *Delays and Blunders. |
| Dogberry. | Much Ado about Nothing |
| Mainmast | *English Fleet. |
| Justice Shallow | Henry IV. |
| Justice Credulous | St. Patrick's Day. |
| Governor Tempest | Wheel of Fortune. |
| Old Toppit. | *Paragraph. |
| Old Hairbrain | *Will for the Deed. |
| Walmsley | Appearance is against them. |
| Don Pedro | Wonder. |
| Gangway | *Thirty Thousand. |
| Gen. Tarragon | *School for Reform. |
| Lord Dauberry | *To Marry or not to Marry. |
| Torrent | *Who wants a Guinea? |
| Major Corslet | Guilty or not Guilty. |
| Don Manuel | She Would and She Would not. |
| Jobson | Devil to Pay. |
| General Bastion | *We Fly by Night. |
| Jaquez | Honey Moon. |
| Menenius | Coriolanus. |
| Count of Rosenheim | *Adrian and Orrila. |
| Stephano | Tempest. |
| Sir Bashful Constant | Way to Keep Him. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Mauritz . . . | *Peter the Great. |
| Sir Adam Contest . . | Wedding Day. |
| Moneytrap . . . | Confederacy. |
| Daniel . . . . | Travellers in Switzerland. |
| Launce . . . . | Two Gentlemen of Verona. |
| Judas . . . . | Bonduca. |
| Governor . . . | *Exile. |
| Diaper . . . . | *School for Authors. |
| Baron Crackenberg . . | *Is he a Prince? |
| Growley . . . . | *Budget of Blunders. |
| Old Mirabel . . . | Inconstant. |
| Heartworth . . . | *Gazette Extraordinary. |
| Moody . . . . | Country Girl. |
| Lafeu . . . . | All's Well that Ends Well. |
| Casimere . . . . | *Quadrupeds of Quedlinbergh. |
| Lingo . . . . | Agreeable Surprise. |
| Bombastes . . . | Bombastes Furioso. |
| Timothy Truncheon . . | Crotchet Lodge. |
| Darby . . . . | Love in a Camp. |
| Torrington . . . | School for Wives. |
| Dozey . . . . | *Past Ten o'Clock. |
| Baillie . . . . | *Maid and the Magpie. |
| Sam Dabbs . . . | *Who's Who? |
| Vandunke . . . . | *Merchant of Bruges. |
| Foresight . . . | Love for Love. |
| Sherasmen . . . . | *Oberon's Oath. |
| Sir Harry Beagle . . | Jealous Wife. |
| Otho . . . . . | Blacksmith of Antwerp. |
| Adam Winterton . . | Iron Chest. |
| Sir Joshua Greybeard . | *Frightened to Death. |
| Trappanti . . . | She Would and She Would not. |
| Kit Sly . . . . | *Cobbler of Preston. |
| Jack Cade . . . | *Richard, Duke of York. |
| Sir Frederick Augustus Pageant. | *High Notions. |
| Diggory . . . . | All the World's a Stage. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Davy . . . . | Bon Ton. |
| Snip . . . . | *Shakespeare versus Harlequin. |
| John Moody . . . | Provoked Husband. |
| Moll Flaggon . . . | Lord of the Manor. |
| April . . . . . | Secrets Worth Knowing. |
| General Vann . . | *Veteran. |

Several characters in obscure pieces are omitted.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

31Jul'57FH

REC'D LD

JUL 22 1962

FEB 26 1973 3 6

REC'D LD JAN 15 '74-1 PM

JUL 21 1974 8 8

REC'D CIRC DEPT JUL 18 '74

MAR 15 1975

IN STACKS

SEP 26 1975

LD 21–100m-6,'56
(B9311s10)476

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

M193813

909
M965
M96

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY